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THE GOD OF OLD

The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel

GREG W. FORBES

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PREFACE

The Gospel of Luke has always had a special attraction for me. So looking back it was no surprise that the most significant portion of my student days was spent learning, reflecting, and finally writing on Luke's story of Jesus. Why the parables? Apart from the scholarly issues which I will detail in the introduction, it probably represents a fascination with Jesus as a storyteller, and the unique stories, in terms of synoptic parallels, that are attributed to him by Luke.

This book is a revised version of my PhD dissertation submitted to Deakin University in 1996. The most significant changes occur in Chapter 15, where the Jewish material has been stratified and the argument more carefully nuanced.

There are many people whom I would like to thank at the outset. In an academic sense I have greatly appreciated the encouragement and practical help given to me by past and present students of the Bible College of Victoria (especially Robyn Broad, Darren Davies, and Neil Amery). Special thanks also to my faculty colleagues—it is a privilege to live and work with such a group of people. Enormous thanks go to Dr Rikki Watts who not only supervised the thesis and offered timely suggestions, but also encouraged me throughout the arduous journey. I am also most grateful to Professor Craig Blomberg, who showed interest in the project and offered helpful suggestions when the thesis was still in the planning stage.

At a personal level I would like to thank my brother Murray who not only provided employment for a needy student, but was gracious in many areas of material support. Thanks also to Phil, Annette, Bruce, Carolyn, Oscar and Lyndel—a great group of friends who managed to show interest in the project despite having no detailed knowledge of the material. Thanks guys, you did more than you will ever know.

But supreme thanks go to my wife Anne-Maree who not only read endless drafts and emotionally supported me throughout, but worked full-time and forwent family additions for ten years to enable me to complete postgraduate studies.

This book is dedicated to my late mother Jean, who sadly never lived either to see this work come to fruition, or to see a rebellious son return from the far country.

Lilydale, Melbourne
March 2000

ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
ACR	*Australian Catholic Record*
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Tests Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950)
ANETStud	Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
ANRW	Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972–)
APOT	R.H. Charles (ed.), *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913)
ASTI	*Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
AUS	American University Studies
AusBR	*Australian Biblical Review*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BAGD	Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. William Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1958)
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDF	Friedrich Blass, A. Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
Bib	*Biblica*
BibLeb	*Bibel und Leben*
BibTod	*The Bible Today*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BK	*Bibel und Kirche*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BT	*The Bible Translator*

BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTS	Biblische-Theologische Studien
BVC	*Bible et vie chrétienne*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZNW	Beihefte zur *ZNW*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Monograph Series
ChQ	*Church Quarterly*
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
CrisTR	*Criswell Theological Review*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CurTM	*Currents in Theology and Mission*
EDNT	H. Balz and G. Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*
EglT	*Eglise et théologie*
EKKNT	Evangelische-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EvJ	*Evangelical Journal*
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
Exp	*Expositor*
ExpTim	*The Expository Times*
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FBBS	Facet Books, Biblical Series
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FZPT	*Freiburg Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*
GNS	Good News Studies
GTA	Göttinger Theologische Arbeiten
GuL	*Geist und Leben*
HBT	*Horizons of Biblical Theology*
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBS	*Irish Biblical Studies*
ICC	International Critical Commentary
Int	*Interpretation*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*

JSNTSup	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, Supplement Series
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KNT	Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
LB	*Linguistica biblica*
LD	Lectio divina
LouvStud	*Louvain Studies*
LouvTPM	Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs
LQ	*Lutheran Quarterly*
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, Robert Scott and H. Stuart Jones, *Greek–English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 9th edn, 1968)
McMastJT	*McMaster Journal of Theology*
MM	J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*
ModTh	*Modern Theology*
Neot	*Neotestamentica*
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	*Novum Testamentum*, Supplements
NRT	*La nouvelle revue théologique*
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTT	New Testament Theology
ÖTKNT	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch Kommentar zum NT
OTL	Old Testament Library
PRS	*Perspectives in Religious Studies*
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
QRevMin	*Quarterly Review for Ministry*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RelLif	*Religion in Life*
ResQ	*Restoration Quarterly*
RevApol	*Revue apologétique*
RevExp	*Review and Expositor*
RevistB	*Revista biblica*
RevRéf	*Revue réformée*
RevThom	*Revue thomiste*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
RTL	*Revue théologique de Louvain*
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series

SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SCJ	Studies in Christianity and Judaism
SE	*Studia Evangelica I, II, III* (= TU 73 [1959], 87 [1964], 88 [1964], etc.)
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SNTA	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTU	Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
SNTW	*Studies of the New Testament and its World*
Str–B	[Hermann L. Strack and] Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (7 vols.; Munich: Beck, 1922–61)
StudJud	Studies in Judaism
StudJud	*Studia Judaica*
SVTQ	*Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
TBC	Torch Bible Commentaries
TBei	*Theologische Beiträge*
TDNT	Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–)
TGeg	*Theologie der Gegenwart*
TGl	*Theologie und Glaube*
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
ThViat	*Theologia Viatorum*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TJT	*Toronto Journal of Theology*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TP	*Theologie und Philosophie*
TPINTC	TPI New Testament Commentaries
TRu	*Theologische Rundschau*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TTod	*Theology Today*
TTZ	*Trierer theologische Zeitschrift*
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
VC	*Vigiliae christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
WW	*Word and World*
ZBNT	Zürcher Bibelkommentar—Neue Testament
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZSSR	*Zeitschrift der Savigny Stiftung für Rechtgeschichte, romantische Abteilung*
ZTK	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

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Part I
INTRODUCTORY ISSUES

Chapter 1

A HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON THE LUKAN PARABLES

Undoubtedly the best known and most loved of Jesus' parables occur only in the Gospel of Luke (for instance, those of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son). In fact, Luke has at least nine narrative parables unique to his Gospel, all of which occur in the Travel Narrative.

While there has certainly been no shortage of research on the parables in general,[1] the Lukan parables have received limited attention. On the one hand, a number of works have appeared recently which analyse individual parables; the more notable being those of Bailey, Pöhlmann, and Bahr on the Prodigal Son (15.11-32),[2] Aus on the Good Samaritan (10.25-37) and the Prodigal Son,[3] Braun on the Great Feast (14.15-24),[4] Paliard, Krämer, and Ireland on the Dishonest Manager (16.1-8),[5] Hintzen on the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31),[6] Binder on the Judge

1. See the following chapter.

2. K.E. Bailey, *Finding the Lost: Cultural Keys to Luke 15* (St Louis, MO: Concordia, 1992), which deals with the three parables of Luke 15; W. Pöhlmann, *Der verlorene Sohn und das Haus: Studien zu Lukas 15,11-32 im Horizont der antiken Lehre von Haus, Erziehung und Ackerbau* (WUNT, 68; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993); H.E. Bahr, *Der verlorene Sohn oder die Ungerechtigkeit der Liebe: Das Gleichnis Jesu heute* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993)—this work was not available to me.

3. R.D. Aus, *Weihnachtsgeschichte–Barmherziger Samariter–Verlorener Sohn: Studien zu ihrem jüdischen Hintergrund* (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1988).

4. W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric in Luke 14* (SNTSMS, 85; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

5. M. Krämer, *Das Rätsel der Parabel vom ungerechten Verwalter* (Zürich: PAS, 1972); C. Paliard, *Lire l'écriture écouter la parole: la parabole de l'économe infidèle* (Paris: Cerf, 1980); D.J. Ireland, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God: An Historical, Exegetical and Contextual Study of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16:1-13* (NovTSup, 70; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).

6. J. Hintzen, *Verkündigung und Wahrnehmung: Über das Verhältnis von*

and the Widow (18.1-8),[7] and Harmansa on the Barren Fig Tree (13.6-9).[8]

On the other hand, there have been several German works investigating the *Sondergut* as a whole which deal with the parables in varying degrees, though their focus has tended to be on form and structural elements. B. Pittner examines the number of characters in the parables and their roles, together with the special features of the parables including openings, conclusions, reversal, and open-endedness.[9] G. Petzke shows how the parables of the *Sondergut* have a personal character: unlike the kingdom parables, they challenge the reader to act in a certain manner. Luke's parables should thus be understood as 'narrative ethic' which offer 'Identifikationsmöglichkeiten'. This explains the popularity of these texts, for in illustrating human behaviour they have a timeless character.[10] H. Klein investigates the L material (including the parables) from a form-critical perspective in order to establish the location and character of the community that transmitted the *Sondergut*. Klein believes that the evidence points to a group of Jerusalem Christians who lacked apocalyptic interest, were more concerned with daily praxis than law, cared for fringe groups, and were still in dialogue with the Pharisees.[11]

The work of G. Schneider is devoted solely to the parables in Luke, but as his focus is on the parousia parables, only one (the Judge and the Widow—18.1-8) is peculiar to the Third Gospel. Using a redaction-

Evangelium und der Leser am Beispiel Lk 16,19-31 im Rahmen des lukanischen Doppelwerkes (BBB, 81; Frankfurt: Hain, 1991).

7. H. Binder, *Das Gleichnis von dem Richter und der Witwe* (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988).

8. H.K. Harmansa, *Die Zeit der Entscheidung. Lk 13,1-9 als Beispiel für das lukanische Verständnis der Gerichtspredigt Jesu an Israel* (Erfurter Theologische Studien, 69; Leipzig: Benno, 1995).

9. B. Pittner, *Studien zum lukanischen Sondergut: Sprachliche, theologische und formkritische Untersuchungen zu Sonderguttexten in Lk 5-19* (Leipzig: Benno, 1991), pp. 111-36.

10. G. Petzke, *Das Sondergut des Evangeliums nach Lukas* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1990), pp. 217-21.

11. H. Klein, *Barmherzigkeit gegenüber den Elenden und Geächteten: Studien zur Botschaft des lukanischen Sondergutes* (BTS, 10; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1987). We will later have cause to question whether the text should be read as a mirror of any Christian community, be it Luke's or an earlier group who transmitted the material.

critical analysis, Schneider concludes that Luke has dampened the *Naherwartung* in these parables.[12]

To my knowledge there have been only three published works in recent times addressed specifically to the parables unique to Luke; those of K.E. Bailey,[13] G. Scholz,[14] and B. Heininger.[15] Bailey has made an invaluable contribution to the study of the parables. His overall goal is to link the historical aspects of parable interpretation to the aesthetic,[16] with the focus of his study being the parables of the Lukan *Sondergut*. Bailey's first stated purpose is to examine the first-century cultural milieu of these parables. This is obtained by following a procedure that he terms 'oriental exegesis'. This method is a combination of the tools of modern scholarship with a study of ancient literature, an inquiry into the lifestyle of contemporary Middle Eastern peasants,[17] and an examination of the Oriental versions (Arabic/Syriac).[18] The second stated purpose of Bailey's study is an examination of Oriental literary forms. He then proceeds to analyse several types of literary structure and shows the importance of these structures for parable interpretation.[19] An appreciation of literary structure enables the identi-

12. G. Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse im Lukas-Evangelium* (SBS, 74; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1975).

13. K.E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) and *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).

14. G. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage und Existenzstruktur: Das Gleichnis der neueren Hermeneutik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der christlichen Existenzstruktur in den Gleichnisses des lukanischen Sonderguts* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983).

15 B. Heininger, *Metaphorik, Erzählstruktur und szenisch-dramatische Gestaltung in den Sondergutgleichnissen bei Lukas* (NTAbh, 24; Münster: Aschendorff, 1991).

16. See the following chapter on parable research in general.

17. While Bailey argues that Middle Eastern culture is static compared to the West (and thus can legitimately give insight into first-century practices), he must still contend with the fact that the culture he examines is geographically and temporally removed from first-century Palestine. Furthermore, he fails to appreciate the influence of Islam on current Middle Eastern culture. Thus not all of his conclusions should be accepted uncritically. For a critique of Bailey along these lines, see C.W. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), pp. 44-46. Ironically though, Bailey's focus is probably closer to Jesus' milieu than Hedrick's application of Aristotle's *Poetica*!

18. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 25-37.

19. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. xix), points out that we cannot know conclusively

fication of the climactic centre of a parable as well as the intended comparisons and contrasts. It also marks off a literary unit[20] and can assist in solving textual problems.[21] Bailey does not offer a synthesis of the Lukan parables, although he does propose a literary structure for the Travel Narrative as a whole.[22]

Scholz's work consists of three parts. First, he evaluates parable research in general, being critical of Jülicher's thesis as too restrictive, but supportive of Via's emphasis on the aesthetic and existential dimension of the parables.[23] This sets the stage for part two, where Scholz examines the Christian faith in terms of structures of existence. Christian existence is both belief and a life model, in which God calls one to decision regarding the manner of one's existence in the world. Scholz believes that this existential model should be used as an interpretive key to the New Testament, though his focus is restricted to the Lukan parables.[24] Overall, Scholz concludes that there was no homogeneous parable source behind Luke's Gospel, for there is a disparity of views regarding possessions and eschatology. Scholz thus seeks the *Sitz im Leben* of every individual parable in order to determine its understanding of Christian existence.[25] Part three contains an exegesis of the parables of the *Sondergut*, focusing on existential interpretation. Scholz concludes that the key to the understanding of existence that emerges from the Lukan parables is the double love commandment: love for God (which is the stronger emphasis) and love for one another.[26] Despite Scholz's tendency to overstress the theme of the Christian mission to the Jews, his work contains some valuable insights and his conclusions are sound.

if these literary forms were intentional. M.A. Tolbert (*Perspectives on the Parables: An Approach to Multiple Interpretations* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], p. 82) criticizes (with some justification) some of the forms proposed by Bailey. For instance, she feels that the 'parabolic ballad' pattern applied to the Lukan parables is subjective and many of his proposed parallels are forced (e.g. the treatment of Acts 4.8-12 in *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 65-66).

20. This, of course, has implications for the authenticity of the appended interpretations, though Bailey does not develop this.
21. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 44-75.
22. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 79-85.
23. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 1-139.
24. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 140-98.
25. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 190-98.
26. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 303-11.

Heininger begins by opposing Sellin in arguing that the parables are not Lukan creations. Rather, there is evidence of a pre-Lukan text, especially given that the parables do not appear to be addressed to a uniform social setting. Further, there are indications of a Palestinian apocalyptic milieu (especially 18.6-8a). This does not deny, however, Luke's hand in the *Sondergutgleichnissen.* In their present form, the parables draw on a wide variety of traditions and literary models, including Old Testament and Jewish tradition, Hellenistic diatribe, comedy, symposium literature, and controversy. Heininger concludes that Luke was formally trained in the skills of rhetoric.[27] He also examines the role of soliloquy as a means of conveying the decisions of the hero of the tale, thereby giving insight into his character, and enabling the hearer/reader to participate more fully in the story.[28]

Heininger then analyses each parable, focusing on form, historical background, tradition and redaction, literary structure, and character formulation analysis. He concludes that, for Luke, the purpose of the parables is their function as action models (which breaks the bounds between parable and example story), for Luke's ultimate concern is the moral behaviour of the Christian community.[29]

The particular focus that Heininger brings with respect to tradition history and literary parallels is insightful, as is his analysis of the role of soliloquy. However, we will later have cause to question whether Luke does, in fact, address a Christian community.

Regarding unpublished material on the Lukan parables I am aware of only two works in English. C.L. Blomberg's concern is to defend the authenticity of the parables of the Travel Narrative by a detailed analysis of their tradition history.[30] In a later published article, Blomberg shows how the parables form a chiasm around 14.7-24, with material of similar nature slotted around each parable. This is what gives the Travel Narrative its disorderly appearance. This chiastic structure was used for mnemonic purposes, and the use of chiasm provides further evidence that the parables are pre-Lukan, for Luke elsewhere shows no interest in chiasm.[31]

27. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, p. 226.

28. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 31-82.

29. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 83-218.

30. C.L. Blomberg, 'The Tradition History of the Parables Peculiar to Luke's Central Section' (PhD dissertation, University of Aberdeen, 1982).

31. C.L. Blomberg, 'Midrash, Chiasmus, and the Outline of Luke's Central

T.L. Noel develops a narrative-critical methodology for parable interpretation, in particular examining various connecting devices between a parable and its context. This leads him to conclude in favour of the unity of Luke's text. However, Noel only examines three parables in Luke, two of which have triple attestation.[32]

Finally, mention should be made of three works that, while not confined to the Lukan parables, attempt some sort of synthesis regarding the unique features of the *Sondergutgleichnissen* and their contribution to Luke's overall program. The general assumptions governing the work of J. Drury are: 1) the parables are allegorical; 2) there is no Q; and 3) the parables reflect the situation of the early church seeking definition *vis-à-vis* Judaism,[33] rather than the historical situation of Jesus. Drury concludes that the L parables are free creations which highlight Luke's artistic ability and reflect his overall interests. These interests are seen in the middle of time pattern (as proposed by Conzelmann), which is evident in the placing of a crisis in the middle of a parable, and also in the human features of the parables (celebrations, shepherds, profit statements and so on). Given the latter feature, the Lukan parables tend to be less allegorical than the parables in Matthew and Mark.[34]

K. Erlemann[35] examines the view of God in several synoptic parables represented by the metaphors *king*, *master*, *householder*, *father* (i.e. a κύριος figure with subordinates). He analyses the tradition history of each metaphor and shows how the parable adapts and utilizes that metaphor and related theological concepts to address the situation of the readers. For Erlemann, the parables enable the interpreter to reconstruct this situation. Thus Luke addresses a community where there are inner tensions (15.11-32), where members lack commitment (16.1-13;

Section', in R.T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives*, III (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 217-61.

32. T.L. Noel, 'Parables in Context: Developing a Narrative-Critical Approach to Parables in Luke' (PhD dissertation; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kentucky, 1986).

33. This will be shown to be a relevant, though slightly incorrect conclusion.

34. J. Drury, *The Parables in the Gospels: History and Allegory* (London: SPCK, 1985). Drury is indebted in many ways to the views of M.D. Goulder, which appear in an earlier article, 'Characteristics of the Parables in the Several Gospels', *JTS* 19 (1968), pp. 51-69.

35. K. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes in den synoptischen Gleichnissen* ((Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1988), pp. 140-44, 185-86, 261-75.

19.11-27), and where cultically or financially superior groups find it hard to embrace a community of equality. While Erlemann's analysis of metaphor, in particular the tensions created by the adaptation and merging of individual metaphors, is valuable, the legitimacy of reading the *Sitz im Leben* of the readers into every pericope is questionable.[36]

Although his book is really a commentary on the major portion of the synoptic parables, J.R. Donahue[37] offers some helpful comments regarding Luke's particular emphases. He shows how the Lukan parables are more realistic and dramatic than those of Matthew and Mark, they lack the Matthean emphasis on the final judgment, and they present a varied cast of actors whose character is often revealed by the use of soliloquy. Donahue's analysis of the Lukan parables is thoughtful, and he shows how these parables are in harmony with the theological orientation of the entire Gospel. He considers this theological orientation to be: a shift in eschatology (not a crisis over the delay of the parousia, but a shift of God's saving action to the σήμερον), the summons to conversion, and a theology of witness.

This book is an attempt to build on several of the above studies and fill what I consider to be a gap in the study of the Lukan parables. There is a need, first of all, to consider the entire corpus of the *Sondergutgleichnissen*, and secondly, considering both their content and number, an attempt must be made to link these parables with Luke's overall purpose. Most studies to date have either focused on a narrower selection of the parables, or have been so broad as to prevent a detailed examination of their contribution to the purpose of the Gospel.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I will survey some of the recent developments in parable research in general. This is necessary in order to lay a methodological basis for a detailed analysis of the Lukan parables in Part II. In Part III I shall synthesize my findings, looking at the various motifs that surface in the parables and seeking a possible unifying motif. I shall then examine how the parables contribute to Luke's major theme; that of promise-fulfilment. Finally, I shall consider Luke's overall purpose and the role played by the parables in achieving that purpose.

It should be stated at the outset that I am not attempting a new

36. This will be discussed further in Chapter 16.

37. J.R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 126-93.

interpretation of the parables, nor am I seeking to reinterpret Luke's purpose. Rather, the contribution that I seek to make to Lukan research is to fill a void in Lukan parable research by drawing together some previously unconnected strands of study. This will, of course, involve critical analysis and evaluation. Stated simply, the goal of the study is to discover the attraction that these particular parables had for Luke as he planned his story of Jesus.

Chapter 2

THE PARABLES: KEY FACTORS IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

1. *Introduction*

Since the publication of Adolf Jülicher's momentous work on the parables of Jesus,[1] parable research has been one of the most dynamic areas of New Testament scholarship. As biblical research is about investigating problems in the meaning and interpretation of the text, the parables provide a fertile soil for discussion due to the number of critical issues their investigation raises. Matters such as authenticity, literary genre, theology, historical setting, transmission, and modern relevance continue to be debated with only a limited consensus in certain areas.

The aim of this chapter is not to provide an exhaustive summary of parable research, for others have done this adequately.[2] Furthermore, the focus of this study is not parable interpretation per se, but a study of certain parables in Luke's Gospel. Nevertheless, some key factors in the history of research need to be discussed, as these factors relate to the methodology employed in this study.

1. A. Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr; I, 1888; II, 1899).

2. See, for example, W.S. Kissinger, *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography* (New Jersey: Scarecrow, 1979); V. Fusco, 'Tendances récentes dans l'interprétation des paraboles', in J. Delorme (ed.), *Les paraboles évangéliques: Perspectives nouvelles* (LD, 135; Paris: Cerf, 1989), pp. 19-60; D. Marguerat, 'La parabole, de Jésus aux évangiles: une histoire de réception', in Delorme (ed.), *Les paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 61-88; C.L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990). For a summary of parable research in the last fifteen years, see W.G. Kümmel, 'Jesusforschung seit 1981: IV. Gleichnisse', *TRu* 56 (1991), pp. 27-53 (with bibliography); C.L. Blomberg, 'The Parables of Jesus: Current Trends and Needs in Research', in B. Chilton and C.A. Evans (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), pp. 231-54.

2. *The Parables as Allegory*

Most of the Fathers,[3] including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine, understood the parables as detailed allegories, with a one-to-one comparison between every detail of the story and some external entity. This gave rise to quite novel interpretations,[4] interpretations which varied considerably from one expositor to the next.[5] The allegorical approach continued through the medieval period[6] up to the Reformation, when it was strongly denounced by Luther and Calvin.[7]

In the post-Reformation period allegory still prevailed in some circles,[8] while there also appeared what became known as the *historico-prophetical* school, in which the parables (like the book of Revelation) were seen to contain a prophecy of church history to the present day.[9]

The work of Adolf Jülicher was a watershed; the beginning of a new epoch of parable research. Jülicher began with the Aristotelian distinction between *simile* and *metaphor*. A *simile* needs no interpretation; its comparison is stated and is obvious. On the other hand a *metaphor* requires interpretation, for it says one thing but points to another. An *allegory* is an arrangement of metaphors in a narrative, while a *similitude* (Gleichnis) is an expanded simile.

3. For a fuller treatment of this period, see A.M. Hunter, *Interpreting the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1960), pp. 21-41; Kissinger, *Parables*, pp. 1-71; R.H. Stein, *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), pp. 42-52.

4. For example, the often quoted interpretation by Augustine (Sermons LX) of the Good Samaritan, where the wounded traveller is fallen man, the innkeeper is the apostle Paul, the two coins relate to the two commandments of love, and the binding of the wounds refers to Christ's restraint of sin.

5. Voices of protest, however, were heard from the Antiochene Fathers, especially John Chrysostom.

6. Kissinger (*Parables*, pp. 41-43), points out that although Aquinas advocated a more literal reading of the Scriptures, he was not consistent in this regarding the parables. For parable interpretation during the medieval period, see S.L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories of Jesus' Parables* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

7. See Kissinger, *Parables*, pp. 44-56.

8. Kissinger (*Parables*, pp. 62-71) discusses the approach of two nineteenth-century writers, R.C. Trench and A.B. Bruce.

9. See Hunter, *Interpreting*, p. 35.

Jülicher argued that most parables are similitudes. They are definitely not allegories, for as Jesus' purpose was to instruct the common folk he would not have spoken in such cryptic terms. Moreover, a parable has one point of comparison only (the *tertium comparationis*) which is self-explanatory, while other details are simply stage props. Jülicher realized that this reasoning had important ramifications for the interpretations that were appended to some of the synoptic parables, for these interpretations treat the parable as an allegory (for example, Mk 4.13-20—the Sower). Consequently, he proposed that the parables have an authentic core that goes back to Jesus, but they have been heavily influenced by the Evangelists who saw a need to interpret them in the line of allegories.[10]

It was not long, however, before Jülicher came under attack for overstating his case. Both C.A. Bugge[11] and P. Fiebig[12] examined the Old Testament and rabbinic *meshalim*, where allegory is clearly present. They felt that Jülicher had relied too much on Greek thought and neglected the obvious Jewish parallels. The parables of Jesus do contain allegorical elements, indeed, some may be termed allegories.[13] Nevertheless, a reluctance to view the parables as allegories in any sense, coupled with an interpretive approach centred around the *tertium comparationis*, persisted in the influential works of C.H. Dodd and J. Jeremias.[14]

With the advent of literary-critical approaches to parable interpretation, emphasis was placed upon the parables as metaphor, whereby metaphor becomes a revelatory image.[15] However, interpreters such as

10 Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden*, I, pp. 1-148.

11. C.A. Bugge, *Die Hauptparabeln Jesu* (Giessen: J. Rickersche, 1903).

12. P. Fiebig, *Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1904).

13. For a fuller discussion of the contribution of these scholars see M.I. Boucher, *The Mysterious Parable: A Literary Study* (CBQMS, 6; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1977), pp. 5-8; Hunter, *Interpreting*, pp. 38-39; Kissinger, *Parables*, pp. 77-83.

14. On Dodd and Jeremias, see below.

15. See, for example, R.W. Funk, *Language, Hermeneutic and the Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 136-47; A.N. Wilder, *Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 71-88; S. McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 71-79.

D.O. Via, G.V. Jones[16] and N. Perrin[17] continued to avoid speaking of the parables as allegories.[18]

It soon became apparent that one's definition of *metaphor* and *allegory* determined one's views regarding the parables as allegory. This is illustrated, on the one hand, by J.D. Crossan, who discusses two uses of metaphor. First, a metaphor may illustrate information already given about the metaphor's referent. In this case the metaphor fulfils a didactic purpose and is expendable once the information has been grasped. This is allegory. Second, the metaphor may precede the information, thus creating a radically new possibility which cannot be expressed without metaphor. In this instance, metaphor is no longer a vehicle for teaching but is the teaching itself, for it does not illustrate but creates participation. It is this latter category to which the parables of Jesus belong.[19]

While scholars like Via and Crossan were insisting that parables were not allegories, Madeleine Boucher used literary-critical definitions to show that they were. Boucher begins by defining some important literary terms. *Form* refers to the structure of meaning. *Genre* relates to the nature of meaning (who it refers to and how). *Mode* is the way a story is told (either directly or indirectly). Indirect mode employs a *trope*, where 'every trope...has two levels of meaning, the direct or literal, and the indirect or tropical'.[20] In turn there are numerous types of tropes including synecdoche, metonymy, irony, and most commonly, metaphor. A metaphor is simply the substitution of the name of one entity for the name of another, with the attributes of the first implied in the second.[21]

16. G.V. Jones, *The Art and Truth of the Parables: A Study in their Literary Form and Modern Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1964), pp. 80-109. Jones distinguishes between symbolism and allegory. Symbolism may be allegorical, but a symbolic story is not an allegory. Parables are mixed forms that defy neat categorization.

17. N. Perrin, *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 104.

18. D.O. Via, *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 13-24.

19. J.D. Crossan, *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992 [orig. 1973]), pp. 9-22. Crossan places the rabbinic parables in the former category.

20. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, p. 18.

21. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 17-20. Regarding the latter point she cites

This leads on to a discussion of allegory, which Boucher defines as nothing more than an extended metaphor in narrative form. This narrative may or may not consist of a series of individual metaphors, but this is unimportant. What is important is that the whole meaning of the narrative is a metaphor for something. In other words, any parable that has both a literal and metaphorical meaning should be termed an allegory. Thus the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15.11-32) is an allegory, for it refers to more than a son coming home to his father. Similarly, the Friend at Midnight (Lk. 11.5-10) is an allegory, for it is more than a story about a neighbour wanting bread.[22]

Boucher contends that the problem in the past has been that allegory has been incorrectly defined as a literary genre, when, in fact, it is only a device of meaning or mode. The genre is *parable*, which, in turn, sometimes uses allegory as a mode.[23] Thus it is incorrect to designate certain parables as *example stories* on the grounds that they contain no metaphors. Rather, the fact that an example story is more than literal shows that the story as a whole is a metaphor.[24] In other words, every parable has two levels of meaning and is therefore allegorical.[25]

As a consequence of the above, it is illegitimate to designate interpretations of parables as inauthentic on the grounds that they are allegorical. They may be secondary, but other criteria (such as coherence) must establish this, with each case assessed individually. Furthermore, even if an interpretation does not go back to Jesus himself it does not necessarily misread the meaning of the parable. Rather, it adapts it to a new setting. For instance, the explanation of the Sower (Mk 4.1-9, 13-20) does not transform the parable into an allegory. The parable is already an allegory as it refers to something to do with the kingdom of God, not to sowing literal seed. It is also important to realize that a parable and its appended application differ in literary structure. The former is tropical narrative while the latter is literal discourse. Nevertheless, both

the example of *the lion rushed forward*, where the lion = Achilles.

22. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 20-21.

23. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 20-21.

24. See also J.T. Tucker, *Example Stories: Perspectives on Four Parables in the Gospel of Luke* (JSNTSup, 162; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), who examines ancient rhetorical treatises and concludes that all parables should be considered as examples, while those labelled as 'example stories' by modern scholars could equally be termed παραβολή by ancient authors. Thus the distinction is an artificial scholarly construct.

25. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 22-24.

function as rhetorical speech. The interpretation merely restates the parable in explicit literal terms, which is a legitimate exercise undertaken by both exegetes and pastors.[26] Furthermore, interpretations of parables and fables are not uncommon in Semitic or classical literature.[27]

Boucher concludes by proposing that Jülicher's distinction between lucid parable and cryptic allegory cannot be maintained.[28] Furthermore, it is erroneous to speak of a single *tertium comparationis*, for a parable comprises a range of points which give an overall meaning. As such, it is incorrect to dismiss 'complex' parables as inauthentic, for what makes a parable complex is not the number of tropes it employs, but how obvious the secondary meaning of the trope actually is.[29]

In an important study that was published soon after that of Boucher, Hans-Josef Klauck also defends the legitimacy of reading the parables as allegory.[30] First of all, Klauck is critical of Via for polarizing allegory and aesthetic objects, and rejects any view which attempts to make allegory serve only one particular task (for instance, the view of Jülicher and Crossan).[31] Klauck then looks at the function of allegory in the ancient world. He concludes that allegory should not be viewed as a *Gattung* in itself, but as a device used in various *Gattungen* in order to entertain, shock, comfort, illumine, and mystify. Moreover, we need to be mindful of the distinction between *Allegorie* (allegory), *Allegorisierung* (allegorization) and *Allegorese* (allegorizing). *Allegorie* is a rhetorical device that gives a text a symbolic dimension, *Allegorisierung* is the expansion of an existing allegory to further clarify

26. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 23, 28, 30-31, 40-41. Boucher does not deny that some of the power of the parable is lost when an interpretation is given.

27. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, p. 31.

28. Boucher (*Mysterious Parable*, p. 37) distinguishes between allegory and the *allegorizing* method of the early Fathers. The latter is invalid, for it sees tropes where there are none.

29. Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 35-38.

30. H.-J. Klauck, *Allegorie und Allegorese in Synoptischen Gleichnistexten* (NTAbh, 13; Münster: Aschendorff, 1978). C.E. Carlston ('Parable and Allegory Revisited: An Interpretive Review', *CBQ* 43 [1981], p. 242) labels Klauck's work as 'surely the most learned study of the parables in any language since Jülicher'.

31. Klauck, *Allegorie*, pp. 4-28. Note that for Jülicher and Crossan allegory serves opposite functions. For the former it conceals meaning while for the latter it teaches and instructs.

and explain (this occurs in some synoptic parables),[32] while *Allegorese* assigns hidden meanings to a text that the author never intended (as in the exegesis of the Fathers). The first two are valid, the latter is not.[33]

Klauck insists that the mere presence of allegory should not be used as a criteria for inauthenticity. Indeed, the Gospel parables belong to the category of allegory and use common metaphors that need to be interpreted in light of their linguistic structure, the intentions of the author, and the reasonable expectation of the hearers. When this is done, interpretation of an allegorical text is not itself allegory.[34]

Hans Weder understands a parable to be a metaphor at the level of composition. However, he does not accept that parable and allegory are one and the same. In a parable the individual features (or metaphors) only function in relation to the entire story. In other words the story as a whole refers to something (for instance, the kingdom), with other points of comparison existing within the story. In an allegory, on the other hand, there is no real connection between the metaphors at an overall level.[35]

The studies of Boucher, Klauck and Weder, together with the growing awareness of the similarity between the rabbinic parables and the parables of Jesus,[36] have meant that most modern interpreters no longer support Jülicher's categorical rejection of allegory. Nevertheless, consensus still does not exist as to whether or not the parables should be considered as allegories per se. J.R. Donahue is fairly typical of a middle ground approach in asserting that while the parables do contain metaphoric speech (and thus have allegorical features), they should not be understood as allegories.[37] An extreme view, which continues to

32. Klauck (*Allegorie*, p. 361) states the maxim, 'No tradition without interpretation'. It is through the process of *Allegorisierung* that the voice of the earthly Jesus is mediated to the Christian community.

33. Klauck, *Allegorie*, pp. 131-47, 354-61.

34. Klauck, *Allegorie*, pp. 354-55.

35. H. Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu als Metaphern* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), pp. 65-71.

36. A selection of the more recent literature on this relationship includes P. Dschulnigg, *Rabbinische Gleichnisse und das Neue Testament* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988); B.H. Young, *Jesus and his Jewish Parables: Rediscovering the Roots of Jesus' Teaching* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989); Blomberg, *Parables,* pp. 158-68; D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

37. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, pp. 10-12.

reject allegory outright, is epitomized by the Jesus Seminar,[38] a group of scholars whose general view of allegory is adequately portrayed by B.B. Scott. Scott concedes that the parables may be allegorical, metaphorical, or a mixture of the two. However, he supports Jülicher's continuing legacy in that the allegorical features of the parables are seen as reflecting the later situation and interpretive stance of the early church. In other words, the presence of allegory in the parables of the historical Jesus is still denied.[39]

At the other end of the spectrum of modern scholarship, C.L. Blomberg proposes that the parables are more allegorical than is normally acknowledged, although they are not necessarily allegorical in every detail. The parables derive their allegorical nature both from the fact that they refer to realities outside of the story, and from the main characters in the story itself, particularly when that character engages in some shocking or extraordinary behaviour.[40] Blomberg proposes that we should speak of an *allegory continuum*, with some stories containing a greater percentage of metaphorical referents than others. In fact, part of the artistry of a parable is to leave the audience wondering about which specific details do have a double meaning. Furthermore, the key to interpreting the parables as allegories lies in recognizing the key

38. The Jesus Seminar was convened in 1985 in the USA, and comprises a group of Gospel specialists who rated the authenticity of the parables of Jesus. Besides a general tendency to see the framework and interpretation of the parables as secondary, certain parables (e.g. the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Dragnet, the Wheat and Tares) were considered inauthentic as a whole. Furthermore, in all instances the *Gospel of Thomas* version of a parable was preferred. See R.W. Funk *et al.*, *The Parables of Jesus: Red Letter Edition* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1988) and the finalized work of the seminar regarding the sayings of Jesus: R.W. Funk, R.W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: What did Jesus Really Say*? (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1993).

39. B.B. Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p. 44. See also C.W. Hedrick, 'Prolegomena to Reading Parables: Luke 13:6-9 as a Test Case', *RevExp* 94 (1997), pp. 179-97, who bewails the existence of religious baggage that interpreters bring to the text that causes them to go down the path of allegory. But I suspect that Hedrick's protest has more to do with reinforcing his own view of the parables as poetic fictions (see below).

40. Blomberg correctly perceives that the shock element of a parable (e.g. a father who runs [Lk. 15.20]) can only be resolved by recognizing the allegorical nature of the story. When it is understood, for instance, that the father represents God, the problem disappears.

referents that would have been intelligible to a first-century Palestinian audience.[41]

In a similar vein, M.C. Parsons,[42] Mary Ford[43] and R.L. Wilken[44] have recently called for the restoration of allegory in Christian interpretation. Ford claims that a denial of allegory in the parables of Jesus stems, first of all, from a misunderstanding of the structure of allegory. It is often wrongly assumed that in allegory $x = a$, whereby information is coded for an elite group to decipher. However, as Sider also demonstrates, most allegories operate at the level x is to y as a is to b.[45] In this way, meaning is derived from the story as a whole, and not from its component parts.[46] Second, an aversion to allegory is a by-product of a secular world-view, which is reluctant to view God actively at work in history, and ultimately does not accept a traditional Christology.[47] Ford concludes by arguing that allegorical interpretation is the means by which the reader applies the text, for without allegory, the parable simply remains a story.[48]

In conclusion, it is difficult to avoid the conviction that not only do the parables contain allegorical details, they may also be considered as allegories at the level of composition. On the one hand, this has been ably demonstrated by literary studies which have shown that the rejection of allegory is based on a narrow and deficient understanding of its

41. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 29-69, 133-63. See also *idem*, 'Interpreting the Parables of Jesus: Where Are We and Where Do We Go From Here?', *CBQ* 53 (1991), pp. 63-75. J.W. Sider ('Proportional Analogy in the Gospel Parables', *NTS* 31 [1995], pp. 1-23) also concludes that parable and allegory are one and the same.

42. M.C. Parsons, ' "Allegorising Allegory": Narrative Analysis and Parable Interpretation', *PRS* 15 (1988), pp. 147-64.

43. J.M. Ford, 'Towards the Restoration of Allegory: Christology, Epistemology and Narrative Structure', *SVTQ* 34 (1990), pp. 161-95.

44. R L. Wilken, 'In Defence of Allegory', *ModTh* 14 (1998), pp. 197-212.

45. Sider's term here is *proportional analogy*. See J.W. Sider, *Interpreting the Parables: A Hermeneutical Guide to their Meaning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

46. Ford, 'Restoration', pp. 168-71.

47. Ford, 'Restoration', p. 194. By this, Ford means Christ as fully God and fully human. We could develop this further and argue that, as a result of this deficient Christology, the allegorical features of the parables are rejected because they underline the fact that through Jesus, God is calling for concrete and tangible action by humankind. Consequently, one finds rather nebulous interpretations of the parables in such writers as Crossan and Scott. This will be discussed shortly.

48. Ford, 'Restoration', pp. 189-93.

function. Allegory is a diverse phenomenon that goes far beyond the level of cryptogram. On the other hand, we need to recognize that Jesus intended to communicate truth about God and humankind via his parables. In other words, the details of a parable have meaning within the story, but some of these details point beyond themselves to higher realities. Here the words of Werner Kelber are appropriate. 'One must conclude that the allegorical features are primarily due to the parable's interconnectedness with the larger story of the gospel.'[49] This explains the quite amusing phenomenon whereby many of those who deny the existence of allegory still conclude with an allegorical interpretation of some parables.[50]

This now leads us into a more general examination of the main interpretive approaches to the parables.

3. *Main Interpretive Approaches to the Parables*

A discussion of the main lines of parable interpretation cannot be divorced from the issue of allegory. However, we need to go deeper and touch on other areas of concern, in particular the disputed areas of how many points a parable may legitimately make, and also the validity of actually interpreting the parables. As with the validity of allegorical interpretation, the answers to these questions are crucial to the methodological framework of our study. We begin again with Jülicher.

In line with his rejection of the parables as allegories, Jülicher maintained that a parable has only one point of comparison, the *tertium comparationis*. However, influenced by his Liberal theology, Jülicher tended to define the *tertium comparationis* in terms of a general moral truth.

This liberalizing tendency was corrected by C.H. Dodd,[51] who saw that the parables need to be understood in an eschatological framework,

49. W. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 63-64. Kelber is speaking specifically of the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mk 12.1-12), but the point is applicable generally.

50. For instance, see J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 128, and Hunter, *Interpreting*, pp. 62-63, who both acknowledge that the father of the prodigal son represents God.

51. C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London: Nisbet, 1961 [orig. 1935]).

for eschatological crisis was characteristic of their original setting. However, whereas Dodd interpreted the eschatology of the parables in a fully 'realized' sense, J. Jeremias[52] presented a more balanced approach, recognizing that eschatology was in the process of being realized. Jeremias also stressed the importance of studying the first-century Palestinian milieu. The Dodd/Jeremias tradition continued to influence interpreters such as A.M. Hunter[53] and R.H. Stein,[54] who also followed Jülicher's heritage in looking only for a single point of comparison in the parable.

The rise of redaction criticism contributed to parable interpretation in two significant ways. First, redactional study drew attention to the *distinctive theology* of a parable. Second, it demonstrated how a parable functions in the wider context of the Gospel structure. For instance, J.D. Kingsbury[55] has shown that the parables of Matthew 13 reflect the Evangelist's own theology and address the needs of the church of his time.[56] The major redactional studies are those of Carlston,[57]

52. Jeremias, *Parables*. See also *idem*, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

53. Hunter, *Interpreting*, esp. pp. 42-91. See also *idem*, *The Parables Then and Now* (London: SCM Press, 1971), pp. 108-121.

54. Stein, *Parables*.

55. J.D. Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A Study in Redaction Criticism* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1969). Kingsbury also argues that Mt. 13 represents the turning point in Jesus' ministry from the Jews at large to the smaller company of the disciples.

56. There has, however, been some criticism of redactional techniques as applied to the parables. Sometimes there is an over-readiness by critics to assume parallels in the synoptic tradition, thus editorial emphases can be mistaken for a different original *Sitz im Leben*. It would seem highly probable that Jesus himself used different forms of essentially the same parable in different contexts. Furthermore, on occasions theological tendencies are assigned to individual Evangelists without solid support. See D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus: Pictures of Revolution* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), p. 220; C.L. Blomberg, 'When is a Parallel Really a Parallel? A Test Case, the Lucan Parables', *WTJ* 46 (1984), pp. 78-103.

57. C.E. Carlston, *The Parables of the Triple Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Carlston examines only those parables with triple attestation, thus does not build a complete redactional study for a particular Gospel. In fact, he states that his concern is to go beyond redaction criticism and deal with questions regarding the authenticity of the tradition and the earliest form of a parable.

Lambrecht,[58] Donahue[59] and Drury,[60] though most recent works on the parables embody some form of redactional analysis. In general, however, redaction criticism of the parables has tended to be overshadowed by the newer literary methods.

The idea of a single *tertium comparationis* began to be challenged by the new hermeneutic, which denied that the parables convey propositional truth.[61] This hermeneutical approach explored the function of speech and word, viewing language as existential address. As such, Jesus' words (especially the parables) are considered as language events which encounter the reader afresh in a new situation, confronting them with a decision regarding authentic existence. In other words, the new hermeneutic was not concerned with the historical setting or with authorial intention (as were Dodd and Jeremias), but with existential interpretation. The key figures of the new hermeneutic regarding the parables of Jesus were Ernst Fuchs,[62] and his students Eberhard

58. J. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure: The Parables in the Gospel of Matthew* (LouvTPM, 10; Louvain: Peeters, 1991). In contrast to Kingsbury's study, Lambrecht examines the parables as a whole in Matthew's Gospel.

59. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable.*

60. Drury, *Parables.* Drury wants to look at the text as we have it, not a subjective reconstruction of what the historical Jesus might have said. As Jesus is not available outside of the Gospel texts, he emphasizes that our focus should be on a parable in its Gospel setting. Drury also claims that parables are allegories that stand in a tradition that goes back to the Old Testament prophets and run through Jewish apocalyptic and Paul. Drury's study examines the parables in each Gospel separately, and his contribution to Lukan research has been noted in the introduction.

61. On the new hermeneutic in general, see P.J. Achtemeier, *An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969); J.M. Robinson and J.B. Cobb Jr (eds.), *New Frontiers in Theology.* II. *The New Hermeneutic* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); A.C. Thiselton, 'The New Hermeneutic', in I.H. Marshall (ed.), *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1977), pp. 308-333; *idem, The Two Horizons* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1980).

62. Fuchs' work appears in a number of essays on hermeneutics, some of which appear in *Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960). The English translation is *Studies of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1964), though some of the essays in the German edition, including 'Bermerkungen zur Gleichnisauslegung', are not included in the English translation. For a summary of Fuchs' contribution, see J.D. Kingsbury, 'Ernst Fuchs' Existentialist Interpretation of the Parables', *LQ* 22 (1970), pp. 380-95; N. Perrin, 'The Modern Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Problem of Hermeneutics', *Int* 25 (1971),

Jüngel[63] and Eta Linnemann,[64] although Linnemann sought to combine the historical-critical approach of Jeremias with an existential interpretation. She also followed Jülicher in insisting that a parable has only one point of comparison.

In the 1970s, the interaction of biblical scholars with secular literary-critical studies brought new horizons to parable research. A.N. Wilder was one of the first to apply the insights of the new hermeneutic *and* literary criticism to the Gospel parables. Wilder discussed parables as metaphor, metaphor not just understood as a sign, but a bearer of the reality to which it refers. Metaphor thus becomes a revelatory image.[65] He also emphasized that the parables are about human nature and real life. As such they show that human destiny is to be worked out in the sphere of everyday creative activity, for it is in this sphere that God challenges us to decision.[66]

Others, too, have stressed the 'everydayness' of the parables, though they have developed more fully Wilder's observation that the parables attempt to teach by their shock factor. The task of metaphor, therefore, is not to offer simple instruction but to confront the reader/hearer by the use of creative, non-conventional language. Ricoeur calls this 'reorientation by disorientation'.[67] Extravagance, hyperbole, mystery and ambiguity all function to challenge the reader to deeper thought and positive action.[68] Seen in this way, the design of a parable is to force a change

pp. 131-48; *idem*, *Language*, pp. 107-13; Kissinger, *Parables*, pp. 180-87. For a critical review of Fuchs see A.C. Thiselton, 'Parables as Language Events: Some Comments on Fuchs' Hermeneutics in Light of Linguistic Philosophy', *SJT* 23 (1970), pp. 437-68.

63. E. Jüngel, *Paulus und Jesus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), pp. 87-174.

64. E. Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1966).

65. Wilder, *Rhetoric*, pp. 71-88.

66. A.N. Wilder, *Jesus' Parables and the War of Myths: Essays on Imagination in the Scriptures* (ed. J. Breech; London: SPCK, 1982), pp. 71-88.

67. P. Ricoeur, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 4 (1975), p. 114.

68. McFague, *Parables*, pp. 76-78; Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 38-42; F.H. Borsch, *Many Things in Parables: Extravagant Stories of New Community* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 15-16. J. Riches ('Parables and the Search for a New Community', in J. Neusner *et al.* [eds.], *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988], pp. 236, 241-42) explains that such extravagant language is due to Jesus' concern to delineate life in the new community as part of the new age. Boucher (*Mysterious Parable,* pp. 64-85) examines the element of mystery at length in the Markan parables. For a

in behaviour governed by a new view of reality.[69]

R.W. Funk claimed that metaphor, by its very nature, continues to live on indefinitely, because it relates to the future as well as to the present and the past. Thus we cannot give the parable a single meaning, for once that meaning is established the parable is expendable.[70]

Via, too, was critical of Jülicher's one central point of comparison, and also of Dodd and Jeremias for an over-emphasis on historical setting. Via argued for an existential approach to the parables. The power of language enables the author to communicate more than he or she is aware. Thus the text may take on a meaning apart from that intended by the writer. Moreover, the parables do not primarily give information regarding Jesus and his situation,[71] though they do this in a subsidiary way. Rather, they convey 'an understanding of the possibility of existence which his situation brought'.[72]

Via also discussed the parables as aesthetic works. By an interlocking of form and content a parable grabs the attention of the hearer, without the hearer seeking to connect the story to outside referents. The one point and historical interpretations narrow the meaning by ignoring this aesthetic function. Rather, the parable must be examined on its own terms, taking due regard for its aesthetic quality.[73]

Sally McFague approached the parables in a similar fashion to Via. She too regarded the parable as an aesthetic creation, and consequently argued that we must not be diverted by such matters as the intention of the author. Furthermore, a parable is a metaphor at every level, and a metaphor does not carry a message—it *is* a message. Moreover, the

discussion of the radical features in Jesus' parables, see N.A. Huffman, 'Atypical Features in the Parables of Jesus', *JBL* 97 (1978), pp. 207-20; and the literature cited in notes 103 and 104 below.

69. H. Hendrickx, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 9-12. Hendrickx describes the way a parable works in terms of: 1) creating distance (alienating); 2) provoking (by shock elements); and 3) appealing for a change in views and behaviour. See also M.J. Gillingham, 'The Parables as Attitude Change', *ExpTim* 109 (1998), pp. 297-300, who discusses the confrontational aspect of the parables in terms of cognitive dissonance.

70. Funk, *Language*, pp. 136-47.

71. D.O. Via ('A Response to Crossan, Funk and Petersen', *Semeia* 1 [1974], p. 222) states, 'I have no interest at all in even the Persona of the historical Jesus'.

72. Via, *Parables*, p. 39.

73. Via, *Parables*, pp. 24, 79.

parable interprets us, we do not interpret the parable.[74]

Writing before Via, G.V. Jones had also insisted that the parables are timeless works of art, which must belong to more than their original setting because they relate to God's being and human existence. To confine a parable to its original setting (even if it can be discerned), or to confine it to only one point, is too restrictive. Jones emphasized that study of the parables must be more than academic pursuit, for parables do not contain doctrine but existence.[75]

In contrast to the purer literary approach of Funk and Via, Crossan[76] was more concerned with historical setting. He argued, however, that we should not view the parables against the background of Jesus' historical situation (*pace* Jeremias); rather, the parables create the historical situation of Jesus.[77] Crossan also emphasized the polyvalent nature of the parables, which he felt was due to two factors: first, all language is itself polyvalent, and second, the metaphors contained in the parables are ubiquitous and untranslatable.[78]

N. Perrin sought to combine the gains of both historical and literary criticism with his understanding of the kingdom as a symbol. The parables show that God and the kingdom are to be experienced existentially in the ordinary aspects of life, yet their radical aspect leaves us naked before their challenge. In this sense the parable is 'almost impossible to live with'.[79] Thus the parables do not teach something about the kingdom, they provoke an experience of the kingdom. The ultimate task of the interpreter is, therefore, to allow the story to speak for itself without attempting to draw lessons from it. This can only be done by both a re-creation of the circumstances of the original setting

74. McFague, *Parables*, pp. 71-79.

75. G.V. Jones, *Art and Truth*, pp. 110-66.

76. Crossan has produced an enormous amount of literature on the parables, utilizing a variety of critical tools. A selection of his works are 'Parable and Example in the Teaching of Jesus', *NTS* 18 (1971), pp. 285-307; *In Parables; Cliffs of Fall: Paradox and Polyvalence in the Parables of Jesus* (New York: Seabury, 1980). For a critical evaluation of Crossan's work on the parables, see F.B. Brown and E.S. Malbon, 'Parabling as Via Negativa: A Critical Review of the Work of John Dominic Crossan', *JR* 64 (1984), pp. 530-38; H.C. Kee, 'Polyvalence and Parables: Anyone Can Play', in P.J. Achtemeier (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1980* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), pp. 57-61.

77. Crossan, *In Parables*, pp. 32-36.

78. Crossan, *Cliffs of Fall*, p. 8.

79. Perrin, *Language*, p. 200.

and an appreciation of the function of language in the new setting.[80]

Recognizing the need to exploit the polyvalent nature of the parables, but also wanting to avoid interpretive anarchy, M.A. Tolbert suggested the following guidelines for interpretation: 1) preservation of the given text (i.e. the actual parable story); 2) grouping of a parable with those of a similar surface structure to provide a context for interpretation by examining formal patterns; and 3) focusing attention on the extraordinary elements of a parable.[81]

The next major shift in parable interpretation was provided by structuralism. Structuralism was applied in secular literary circles earlier this century, but was only introduced into New Testament studies in the 1970s.[82] It is concerned to analyse the deep structures of language which lie below the surface of narrative fiction and operate in the author's mind at a subconscious level. In contrast to the approach of the new hermeneutic, structuralism assumes that the text has a fixed meaning which can be ascertained by scientific investigation. Structuralism has proven to be a very complex and cryptic discipline, with many not impressed by its initial results.[83] It also tends to be ahistorical, having

80. Perrin, *Language*, pp. 194-205. Perrin's analysis can be criticized at three levels. First, it is questionable whether we should regard the kingdom in terms of a symbol (see Via's review in *Int* 31 [1977], pp. 181-83). Second, we may ask whether a text can really speak for itself, for all texts need some level of interpretation. Third, every experience teaches something.

81. Tolbert, *Parables*, pp. 51-91. Tolbert (*Parables*, pp. 93-114) then applies these guidelines to the parable of the Prodigal Son, where two possible interpretations are examined. The first focuses on the father and the younger son, the second on the father and the older son. Tolbert rejects the latter interpretation as it violates the integrity of the parable story.

82. For a analysis of structuralism as applied to biblical literature see D. Patte (ed.), *Semiology and Parables: Exploration of the Possibilities Offered by Structuralism for Exegesis* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976); D. Patte, *Structural Exegesis for New Testament Critics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); R.W. Funk, *Parables and Presence: Forms of the New Testament Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), pp. 19-65; D.C. Greenwood, *Structuralism and the Biblical Text* (Berlin/Amsterdam/New York: Mouton, 1985); E.P. Sanders and M. Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 1989), pp. 234-39. Tolbert (*Parables,* pp. 35-40) has a brief discussion, while the various articles in *Semeia* vols. 1, 2 and 9 apply structural analysis to the parables. For a less technical application of structuralism to the parable of the Prodigal Son, see P. Perkins, *Hearing the Parables of Jesus* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 52-62.

83. Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 150; J. Lambrecht, *Once More Astonished: The*

no real interest in the historical background of the text or author.[84]

Reader-response criticism, a form of post-structuralism, repudiates some of the key features of structuralism.[85] In particular, it argues that there is no objective meaning to a text, for meaning is not dependent on authorial intent but arises out of an interaction between text and reader. In other words, meaning is a subjective creation of the reader, for a text may legitimately say something different to, or more than, what the author intended. When a parable is viewed in these terms, allegory is a possibility, though of course it is not the only possibility. Susan Wittig, for instance, claims that the imposition of a meaning circumvents the crucial aspect of allowing the reader of the parable to create his or her own meaning.[86]

Many biblical scholars feel, however, that reader-response criticism needs some control in order to be meaningful. H. Frankemölle, for instance, suggests that we need to tame the 'multi-headed monster of linguistic method' and make it serve the exegetical task.[87] Others, too,

Parables of Jesus (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 11. Both these writers point out that structuralism expresses in a complex and technical manner what is already discernible by other means of analysis. In addition, see the articles and responses in *Semeia* vol. 1, where Via and Crossan both employ structuralist analysis on the parable of the Good Samaritan and reach radically different conclusions. For Crossan, the parable is a parable of the kingdom, where the kingdom abruptly invades a person's consciousness. Via contends, on the other hand, that it lacks the characteristics of a kingdom parable and is therefore not a parable but an example story.

84. Ricoeur, 'Biblical Hermeneutics', p. 29.

85. On reader-response criticism, see R.M. Fowler, 'Who is "The Reader" in Reader Response Criticism?', *Semeia* 31 (1985), pp. 5-23; J.P. Tompkins, *Reader-Response Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); W.W. Klein *et al.*, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), pp. 138-45, 438-40. On post-structuralism in general, see D.S. Greenwood, 'Poststructuralism and Biblical Studies: Frank Kermode's *The Genesis of Secrecy*', in R.T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives 3* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), pp. 263-88. Greenwood examines the notion of *free play* (the liberties available to the reader), *deconstruction* (how a literary text dismantles itself) and also looks at the institutional control of interpretation. For a helpful, non-technical summary of post-structuralism and reader-response criticism, see Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 152-61.

86. S. Wittig, 'A Theology of Multiple Meanings', *Semeia* 9 (1977), p. 97.

87. H. Frankemölle, 'Kommunikatives Handeln in Gleichnissen Jesu: Historisch-kritische und pragmatische Exegese. Eine kritische Sichtung', *NTS* 28 (1982), pp. 61-90.

are cautious. Blomberg points out that we need to draw the distinction between an objective meaning governed by the original setting of a parable, and multiple contexts for application. The latter are created by the reader but the former is not. To the extent that reader-response criticism emphasizes the freedom and power of the reader to translate the parable into a new context, it is invaluable. However, this is not usually how the discipline advertises itself.[88] A.C. Thiselton contends that reader-response criticism is valuable in the sense that: 1) it deals with different perspectives on a parable; 2) it frees the text from the time-bound constraints imposed by the historical-critical model; and 3) it cuts through the false assumption that a text has an obvious meaning apart from the stance and expectations of the interpreter. However, it is inadequate when used in isolation as a single hermeneutical model, for this will inevitably lead to hermeneutical radicalism and interpretive anarchy.[89] Thiselton also notes that the inherent danger of the idea of an autonomous text (where meaning is achieved solely by an interaction between text and reader) is that ultimately there is no necessity for the reader (or reading community) to be challenged or transformed by the text. Furthermore, if a text has no objective meaning, then there is no definite Christian message to proclaim, for the principles of revelation and grace have been undermined. Rather, reading the scriptures becomes a process of 'religious self-discovery' which is 'potentially idolatrous'.[90]

I have already discussed in my summary of Lukan parable research the work of K.E. Bailey. In view of the present study, attention should be drawn to another feature of his method—that of the *theological cluster.* Bailey shows how, in addition to specific referents (which for

88. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 152-60.

89. A.C. Thiselton, 'Reader Responsibility Hermeneutics, Action Models and the Parables of Jesus', in Thiselton, *et al.*, *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 79-113. An example of such anarchy may be seen in D.O. Via, 'The Prodigal Son: A Jungian Reading', *Semeia* 9 (1977), pp. 21-43, where he believes that the parable can be read in terms of the alienation of the ego to self and its subsequent reconciliation. M.A. Tolbert ('The Prodigal Son: An Essay in Literary Criticism from a Psychoanalytical Perspective', *Semeia* 9 [1977], pp. 1-20) believes that the parable illustrates the conflict and desire for resolution that forms the fabric of daily social life.

90. See A.C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), esp. pp. 546-50.

its original audience would have been readily identifiable), a given parable also includes a number of theological themes, sometimes implied, sometimes presupposed. These themes are termed the *theological cluster*. In the parable, this cluster works to force the hearer/reader into a response. Thus, while a parable may try to elicit a single response, it is not confined to having only one single idea. Bailey cites T.W. Manson with approval in asserting that a parable is a 'datum for theology'.[91]

In the past two decades, literature on the parables has continued to be produced in encyclopaedic proportions. Given the confines of this study, I shall only discuss some of the more significant and relevant contributions.[92]

Although not using the language of the new hermeneutic, J.E. Breech analyses the parables in existentialist terms. He agrees with the general scholarly trend by rejecting the literary context as an aid to interpretation, as this context is a creation of the early church. He concludes that none of Jesus' parables reflect a situation of conflict. Rather, they are concerned with human life and human reality. Breech also discusses how silence (what is not said) plays an important role in the meaning and function of a parable. He concludes that the parables are not about Jesus himself, nor do they address our perennial religious, moral or social questions.[93]

91. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 37-43. See T.W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 73.

92. For a comprehensive overview of parable research since 1980, see Kümmel, 'Jesusforschung', pp. 27-53 (with bibliography); Blomberg, 'Current Trends', pp. 231-54.

93. J.E. Breech, *The Silence of Jesus: The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 1-11, 98, 213-22. It is difficult to agree with Breech regarding the lack of reference to Jesus himself in the parables. The parables are certainly about God, and it is clear that in the Gospels it is Jesus who acts as God's agent in establishing his kingdom. Consequently, the parables are at least implicitly related to Jesus. Others have even been willing to argue that in the parables we are confronted with quite weighty evidence of Jesus' deity. See P.B. Payne, 'Jesus' Implicit Claim to Deity in his Parables', *TJ* 2.1 (1981), pp. 3-23, who shows that in the actions of the Sower, Bridegroom, Shepherd and Judge, Jesus is claiming to perform the traditional work of God. Blomberg (*Parables*, pp. 313-27) has a discussion on the Christology of the parables and comes to essentially the same conclusions as Payne. Christology will be discussed in connection with the Lukan parables in Chapter 13, below.

Breech's understanding is paralleled to a limited extent by W. Harnisch. Harnisch believes that the parables reflect a tension between the real and the possible. This tension, created by the use of metaphor, does not exist at sentence level but at the level of the story itself. For example, in the parable of the Great Supper *reality* refers to grief in the present world, while *possibility* relates to fulfilment and peace in the world. Like many, Harnisch emphasizes that a parable cannot be translated into discourse, for it is more than a simple story. However, unlike most, he claims that the parables do not depict the kingdom, but bring the power of the kingdom to reality.[94]

Important insights have been provided by E. Arens[95] and H. Frankemölle[96] in analysing the communicative function of the parables. Arens shows how the parables work at three separate levels: they promote acceptance of the marginalized, counter Jesus' critics, and teach of the arrival of the kingdom. It is the second level, however, that is the dominant focus for Arens. Jesus' 'subversive stories' are designed to convince his opponents (such as the Pharisees) to revise their ideas and actions by showing them the illogical nature of their present understanding.

In line with the trend towards a sociological analysis of the New Testament writings, W.R. Herzog wishes to demonstrate that the parables are a comment on the oppression of the peasant class by the aristocratic ruling class. They do not, therefore, depict the kingdom of God, but are an analysis of the contemporary social situation of Jesus. Although Herzog's work is insightful in many respects, it is ultimately marred by his unilateral rejection of the literary setting.[97]

94. W. Harnisch, *Die Gleichniserzählungen Jesu: Eine hermeneutische Einführung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985).

95. E. Arens, *Kommunikative Handlungen: Die paradigmatische Bedeutung der Gleichnisse Jesu für eine Handlungstheorie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1982). This book was unavailable to me; however, a summary of Arens' position appears in an earlier article, 'Gleichnisse als kommunikative Handlungen Jesu', *TP* 56 (1981), pp. 47-69. See also P. Dschulnigg, 'Positionen des Gleichnisverständnisses im 20 Jahrhundert: Kurze Darstellung von fünf wichtigen Positionen der Gleichnistheorie', *TZ* 45 (1989), pp. 342-44. In his latest book, *Christopraxis: Grundzüge theologischer Handlungstheorie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1992), Arens takes a wider look at pragmatic theory, incorporating the Gospels as a whole as well as the theological and pastoral life of the church.

96. Frankemölle, 'Kommunikatives Handeln', pp. 61-90.

97. W.R. Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as the Pedagogue of*

Two further studies which reject the common consensus that the parables are concerned with the kingdom of God are those of F. Vouga[98] and C.W. Hedrick.[99] Hedrick believes that the parables must be understood as poetic fiction, that is, simple stories that need no external referents such as the kingdom of God. He contends that the original understanding of the parables was lost very early in the tradition, and consequently allegory and metaphor were utilized to make them comprehensible. Thus Hedrick rejects all the Gospel contexts as secondary.[100] As an example of Hedrick's approach, the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10.25-37) is understood as an example of what it means to be a righteous man,[101] while the Judge and the Widow (Lk. 18.1-8) shows that true righteousness must include proper motives.[102]

While it was the literary critics such as Wilder and Ricoeur who first discussed how Jesus utilized the non-conventional in his parables, thus giving them an extraordinary dimension, more recent studies have pursued this further. T. Schramm and K. Löwenstein examine the use of the immoral hero,[103] G. Aichele looks at the realm of the 'fantastic',[104] while A. Parker examines the disturbing aspects of the parables in terms of cognitive dissonance.[105] Parker argues that the parables are not meant to conceal but to be clearly understood. The aim is to stimulate awareness and straighten out incorrect attitudes. Thus the parables function as part of Jesus' healing ministry. In this respect Parker's work overlaps with that of C. Kähler, who also examines the parables in

the Oppressed (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994).

98. F. Vouga, 'Jésus le conteur', in P. Bühler and J.F. Habermacher (eds.), *La narration: Quand le récit devient communication* (Geneva: Labor & Fides, 1988), pp. 107-130.

99. Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions.*

100. Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions*, pp. 3-89.

101. Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions*, pp. 113-16.

102. Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions,* pp. 205-207.

103. T. Schramm and K. Löwenstein, *Unmoralische Helden: Anstössige Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

104. G. Aichele, 'The Fantastic in the Parabolic Language of Jesus', *Neot* 24 (1990), pp. 93-105.

105. A. Parker, *Painfully Clear: The Parables of Jesus* (Biblical Seminar, 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). See also Gillingham, 'Parables as Attitude Change', pp. 297-30.

therapeutic terms as offering a solution to a situation of existential conflict.[106]

The background for the parables of Jesus has been the attention of two major works. B.H. Young examines the extant rabbinic parables and concludes that the parables of Jesus and the rabbis reflect a common didactic method employed by Jewish teachers during the period of the second temple.[107] E. Rau, on the other hand, probes beyond late Israelite religious thought and examines the substantial influence of Hellenistic-Roman rhetoric.[108]

Two recent commentaries on the entire corpus of synoptic parables are worthy of mention. Although sharing much in common with Crossan and other members of the SBL Parables Seminar and the Jesus Seminar, B.B. Scott also advances the view that parables are not just illustrations, but an example of the way in which oral cultures think. Stories become vehicles for thought. Therefore, it is misguided to seek the original form of a parable, 'because the parable was oral and it passed out of existence as soon as it was spoken'.[109] One cannot 'posses' an original parable; in oral cultures it is the basic outline or structure that is remembered and performed anew.[110] Parables thus take priority over their context. Consequently, it is unproductive to search for an original setting. A parable indeed had many settings, even in the ministry of Jesus, for Jesus no doubt employed a parable more than once. 'Storytellers develop a corpus of stories that they employ in a variety of situations.'[111]

106. C. Kähler, *Jesu Gleichnisse als Poesie und Therapie* (WUNT, 78; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995). For example, Kähler proposes that the parable of the Judge and the Widow (Lk. 18.1-8) encourages one to maintain optimism in the midst of an evil world in view of God's concern for justice and the reality of his future just rule.

107. Young, *Jesus and his Jewish Parables*. Young's study is marred by his tendency to interpret Jesus and the synoptic Gospels through the lens of rabbinic Judaism. For example, he argues that the kingdom was not an eschatological, but a moral concept. However, this ignores the influence of the prophetic tradition and apocalyptic Judaism.

108. E. Rau, *Reden in Vollmacht: Hintergrund, Form und Anliegen der Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).

109. Scott, *Hear*, p. 40.

110. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 37-40.

111. Scott, *Hear*, p. 42. Note that here Scott also rejects the notion that the original setting was one of conflict with the Pharisees.

Scott also discusses how parables are 'antimyth', in that they shatter the world of myth which seeks to overcome life's contradictions.[112] In this sense he agrees with Crossan, showing how a parable gives new, often novel insights. This is done by employing both resemblance and dissimilarity in order to challenge the preconceived notions of the hearers, thereby forcing them to redefine cherished beliefs and notions.[113]

The work of Blomberg has been referred to on a number of occasions already, and it is perhaps appropriate to conclude this section by summarizing his findings. In line with his basic thesis that the parables are more allegorical than is normally acknowledged, Blomberg is critical of methods which either limit a parable to one meaning, or refuse to allow a parable to have any concrete meaning. He points out that if the parables are truly language events that challenge existing belief, then this challenge must be felt as propositional communication. If not, there will be continued uncertainty about how to respond.[114]

Building on the earlier observation of Funk, Blomberg shows how an analysis of surface structure reveals that a number of the parables reflect a simple triadic structure. Normally this structure embodies a master figure and two subordinates, which equate roughly to God (or his representative), his followers, and his antagonists. The main points of the story align with each main character. Blomberg concludes that each parable tends to make one point per main character (with usually two or three characters), and it is the main characters who normally give the parable its allegorical nature.[115]

In conclusion, it is evident that the precise function of the parables remains a debated issue. It is generally recognized that the parables can no longer be considered as mere simple stories designed to illustrate and educate, though clearly this is one of their intended functions.[116]

To some extent, one's understanding of function is determined by

112. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 37-39. At this point Scott interacts with the thought of Lévi-Strauss regarding myth.

113. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 42-62.

114. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 133-44.

115. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 162-63.

116. B. Gerhardsson, 'If We Do Not Cut the Parables out of Their Frames', *NTS* 37 [1991], pp. 321-28) argues that when we treat the parables in the frames in which they come, we see that their main function is to clarify and teach. Sometimes they may attack or defend, but this is a secondary aim only. He states that 'they are designed by a man with a message which he wants to elucidate' (p. 328).

how one interprets the enigmatic statement of Mk 4.10-12.[117] Apart from this, however, there is still a limited consensus. While the parables disarm the hearer/reader by their everyday realism and simplicity, the use of hyperbole, extravagance and the unusual are obviously designed to *shock*. This shock element is, in turn, designed to challenge and provoke a certain response. Nevertheless, there is disagreement as to whether the majority of the parables should be understood in the context of conflict (so Linnemann/Arens) or in terms of an existential challenge to the disciples (so Breech/Young/Scott). Perhaps the answer lies not in either/or but in both/and.

It has been fashionable in recent times to deny the validity of interpreting the parables, at least in terms of propositional speech. It is argued that we must simply let the parables speak, for they cannot, by their very nature, be cast into a propositional mould. Others emphasize reader response, refusing to concede that a text has an objective, fixed meaning.

Although it is definitely true that a parable has a certain intrinsic force when it remains a parable, every reader comes to the text with the goal of interpretation. No text speaks of itself! Furthermore, Jesus obviously meant to communicate something tangible, not to offer unlimited possibilities.[118] While it may be difficult to regain Jesus' precise intention in certain instances (such as Lk. 16.1-8, the Dishonest

117. The main lines of interpretation are as follows: 1) Mark has misunderstood the use of παραβολή in the narrow sense of *parable* when in fact it means *riddle/secret*. Consequently these verses belong to another context and refer to Jesus' proclamation as a whole (Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 13-18); 2) reduce the force of ἵνα to mean *unless* or *because* (following *Targ. Isa.* 9.6-10 which Mark's quote most closely resembles); 3) there was a mistranslation of the Aramaic *de* which should read *who* (Manson, *Teaching*, pp. 78-80); 4) ἵνα introduces the Old Testament quote (W.L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], p. 159); 5) the verses were written back by the early church to show why the Jews rejected Jesus (Dodd, *Parables*, pp. 13-15; Carlston, *Parables*, pp. 97-109); 6) the saying relates only to the parable of the Sower (G.V. Jones, *Art and Truth*, pp. 225-30); 7) the saying is authentic in this context and differentiates between cognitive hearing only (i.e. *those outside*) and true hearing, teaching about the results that arise from spiritual blindness (Boucher, *Mysterious Parable*, pp. 42-63; Klauck, *Allegorie*, p. 251; S.J. Kistemaker, *The Parables of Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980], pp. xviii-xix; Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 40-41). The last of these options seems to be the most natural solution to the problem as it fits with the repeated commands to *listen* in vv. 3, 9, 23, 33.

118. Stein, *Parables,* pp. 68-69.

Manager), Luke certainly understands the tradition in a particular way. He then attempts to communicate his understanding of the significance of that tradition by placing it in a given setting and providing interpretive comments from either the tradition or himself (for instance, Lk. 16.8b-13; 18.1, 14). In other words, Luke wants his readers to learn something concrete from the text. The dangers of reader-response criticism (i.e. the idea of an autonomous text) have already been discussed. Consequently, while not wanting to downplay the importance of the pre-understanding of the reader, reader-response criticism needs some regulation if it is going to avoid the pitfalls of interpretive anarchy or listlessness. This control is best provided by the historical-grammatical meaning of the text.

4. *The Authenticity of the Parables*[119]

The matter of authenticity has surfaced at times throughout this discussion. Here I shall attempt an overview and an assessment of the current situation.

It has been the general consensus of twentieth-century scholarship that the parables are the closest we come to the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus. This is so because of their reflection of a Palestinian background, their use of Aramaic idiom, and their tendency to satisfy the other so-called *criteria for authenticity*.[120] However, it has been an enduring legacy of Jülicher that an authentic core of a parable is often separated from the appended framework. The latter, which often does not appear to capture the central feature of a parable, is seen as the work of the early church

119. Although this study is concerned with Luke's use of the parables (i.e. their Gospel setting), the matter of authenticity, especially with regard to the appended framework, is pertinent to our discussion. If the framework can be shown to be secondary, this gives the interpreter insight into how Luke has understood and used the parable in contrast to the original *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.

120. Apart from Palestinian background, the criteria for authenticity are normally seen as *dissimilarity*, *multiple attestation* and *coherence*. For a discussion of these criteria, see R.H. Stein, 'The "Criteria" for Authenticity', in R.T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives*, I (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 225-63; S.C. Goetz and C.L. Blomberg, 'The Burden of Proof', *JSNT* 11 (1981), pp. 39-63; C.L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Leicester: IVP, 1987), pp. 246-54. For acceptance of the originating structure of the parables because of dissimilarity see Scott, *Hear*, pp. 63-64.

or the Evangelists, who sought to interpret the parables along the lines of allegory.

The above approach is fairly representative of modern scholarship, and has been popularized in recent times by the Jesus Seminar. However, those scholars who are willing to concede that the parables are allegories in one form or another are also more willing to view the interpretations as authentic. Blomberg, for example, points out that since parables should be considered as allegories, their interpretations are consistent with this fact. Furthermore, most parables make more than one point, thus the appended logia relate to a point that can be legitimately derived from the parable.[121] Moreover, the Old Testament and rabbinic parables reflect a tendency for explanations, and we should not underestimate their link to the synoptic parables.[122]

J.W. Sider has also produced a forceful and well-argued attack on the Jeremias tradition. He argues that hypothesis builds on hypothesis to produce a supposed reconstruction of the original text that is, at best, subjective and dubious. Finding support from secular literary critics such as Northrop Frye, he claims that we must deal with the texts as they stand in the Gospels. While those texts may not be totally authentic, they are more reliable than any proposed reconstruction.[123]

In his later work on the parables of Luke 15, Bailey makes some further important contributions to the study of the parables. He contends that Jesus of Nazareth must be seen not merely as a storyteller or an example of love, but as a serious theologian with a powerful and astute mind. Furthermore, in telling his parables Jesus stood in the Old Testament and wider Middle Eastern tradition, in which metaphor and

121. Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 93. For example, he notes how the three appendices to Lk. 16.1-8 (the Dishonest Manager) each fit a particular theme: God's commendation, the steward's cleverness and the heavenly reception. In addition, he argues that most parables have some kind of interpretation, no matter how brief.

122. Based on a study of Jewish parables, C.H. Cave ('The Parables and the Scriptures', *NTS* 11 [1964–65], pp. 374-87) shows the importance of examining the literary context for parable interpretation.

123. J.W. Sider, 'Rediscovering the Parables: The Logic of the Jeremias Tradition', *JBL* 102 (1983), pp. 61-83. Thiselton ('Reader Responsibility', pp. 100-101) is critical of Sider for polarizing history and literature. He points out that not all historical inquiry is sceptical, nor does it work at cross purposes to the task of doing justice to the text. This criticism of Sider appears somewhat harsh. Sider is not denigrating all historical inquiry, merely that which presumes inauthenticity then believes that it can offer an objective reconstruction.

simile were the primary focus of speech, creating meaning rather than merely illustrating a concept. This is the opposite to Western thought, in which a concept is proposed with the option of illustrating that concept if so desired. Nevertheless, it is significant that in Middle Eastern thought metaphor and simile do not stand alone. In many cases the metaphor is enclosed within, or is followed by, a conceptual interpretation. Thus, although the conceptual interpretation is of secondary importance, it is still a legitimate component of thought.[124]

This, of course, has enormous implications for the authenticity of the interpretations attached to the Gospel parables. It can no longer be simply assumed that such interpretations are inauthentic creations of the early church or of the Evangelists, for the method of metaphor plus interpretation has firm roots both in Old Testament tradition and in the cultural milieu.[125]

It appears then, that once a *prima facie* case for understanding the parables as allegory is established, much of the rationale for considering their interpretive framework as secondary disappears. In addition, once it is recognized that metaphor and interpretation are a common feature of Old Testament literature, Middle Eastern tradition and the rabbinic parables, it becomes intellectually untenable simply to ignore the appended framework. Of course, this does not prove that the framework is original, for in many cases it clearly is not (for instance, Lk. 18.1, 9). However, the issue must be decided by contextual factors and no longer dismissed on *a priori* grounds.[126] In any case, the frame-

124. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 15-28.

125. Bailey offers Isa. 55.8-9 as one example of parable enclosed within conceptual thought:

> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
> nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
> so are my ways higher than your ways
> and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Note also Isa. 5.1-7, where the Song of the Vineyard is followed by an explanation to the effect that the vineyard is to be understood as the nation of Israel who had failed to yield justice and righteousness.

126. Another factor that has a bearing on the authenticity of the parables and their interpretations is the issue of Gospel genre. Until recently this has been a rather unfruitful area of Gospel research, with no consensus reached (except, perhaps, that the Gospels are an entirely new genre). However, the recent work of R.A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*

work gives the reader a clear understanding of how the Evangelist wants the parable to be understood, and if our goal is to interpret the parables in their literary and theological setting, the interpretations become indispensable.

Summary

Based on the foregoing analysis, our study will proceed on the basis that: 1) parables do contain allegory and thus point to referents beyond the story; 2) parables can be legitimately interpreted and may make more than one point; and 3) the literary framework is crucial in showing how the Evangelist (and the early church) understood the parable.

(SNTSMS, 70; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) has demonstrated that the Gospels should be considered as an example of the Greco-Roman βίοι, which aim to preserve the memory of a central figure. (While there are some unique features in the Gospels, the differences between them and the βίοι are no greater than those in the βίοι themselves). In the Gospels, the central figure is Jesus, and as the Gospels were written within the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries, there would certainly have been restriction on free composition. With this in mind, the Gospel texts must be taken seriously, for they do not aim to present a picture of the early church, but to preserve the words and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth.

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Part II
AN ANALYSIS OF THE LUKAN PARABLES

INTRODUCTION

Now that a methodological basis from which to study the parables has been laid, I shall undertake a thorough analysis of the parables of the Lukan *Sondergut*. At this point, the scope of the undertaking needs to be defined. First of all, as the boundaries between narrative parable, parabolic saying and simile are sometimes hazy, a choice has to be made as to what material to cover. Second, the constraints of space dictate the need for selection. Therefore, I shall examine only the major narrative parables that comprise the Lukan *Sondergut*, with the following inclusions: 1) the Great Feast (14.15-24), though similar to Mt. 22.1-10 in some respects, has some distinctive traits that are important to Luke's work; 2) the Lost Sheep (15.4-7) is shared with Matthew (18.12-14), but forms an integral part of the Parables of the Lost in Luke 15. Consequently, when reference is made to the *Lukan parables*, it is on the understanding that one, and possibly two, of these parables are not unique to Luke.

Another factor to be considered is the depth of the analysis. Because I am primarily concerned with the theological aspects of the parables, the exegesis will not be exhaustive. Only the significant textual variants will be considered, and linguistic matters will be treated only where relevant to our conclusions. Nevertheless, it is important that the analysis be comprehensive in order correctly to assess the various motifs that arise and to justify the conclusions that will follow.

Finally, no attempt at a synthesis will be made until Part III of the study. In this way, I hope to avoid the impression of forcing the parables into a pre-conceived mould.

Chapter 3

THE GOOD SAMARITAN (10.25-37)

1. *Introduction*

The Lukan setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan moves from a private address by Jesus to his disciples following their mission to the towns of Israel (10.1-24), to a question posed by an expert in the law. Luke may have seen, however, a thematic link between the two sections along the lines of accepting or rejecting the message of the kingdom—here discussed in terms of eternal life.

The dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer centres around love for God and love for one's neighbour. The parable of the Good Samaritan addresses the latter (10.29-37), while the former is illustrated to some extent by the episode with Mary and Martha (10.38-42),[1] and the instructions regarding prayer and persistence in prayer (11.1-13).

The question posed by the lawyer raises a difficult source-critical issue[2] of the relationship between Lk. 10.25-28 and Mk 12.28-34, as

1. The Mary and Martha incident illustrates love for God in terms of listening to the teaching of Jesus (cf. Jn 8.42-49). J. Nolland (*Luke* [WBC, 35; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993], II, p. 580) notes how both passages expose the apparent. The priest and Levite are apparently serving God, but do not help their fellow man. Martha is apparently helping others, but does not listen to the words of Jesus (see also Patte, *Structural Exegesis*, p. 113). Together, both passages reflect a *hearing–doing* response to Jesus (so D.M. Sweetland, 'The Good Samaritan and Martha and Mary', *BibTod* 21 [1983], pp. 325-30).

2. Although the synoptic problem has been thrown open once more in recent times, I am assuming Markan priority and working with the two-source hypothesis as still the least problematical way of understanding the synoptic relationship. For a discussion, see R.H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987); S. McKnight, *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), pp. 33-44; Sanders and Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels*, pp. 51-102; S. McKnight, 'Source Criticism', in D.A. Black and D.S. Dockery (eds.), *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids:

well as the related problem of the original unity of Lk. 10.25-37. Quite a number of commentators believe that Luke has reworked the Markan tradition, extracting the saying from its original context and placing it in a more prominent position as an introduction to this parable.[3] However, the differences in the Lukan account[4] are sufficient to point us in other directions. It is also unlikely that Luke and Matthew share a common version of the incident.[5] This leaves us with two possibilities. Either we have three independent accounts of the same incident,[6] or

Zondervan, 1991), pp. 136-63. For a stimulating recent defence of the priority of Matthew, together with a claim that all the Evangelists relied on oral tradition more than has been previously conceded, see J. Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991). P.M. Head (*Christology and the Synoptic Problem: An Argument for Markan Priority* [SNTSMS, 94; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997]) defends Markan priority on the basis of christological redactional patterns.

3. So J. Schmid, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (RNT, 3; Regensburg: Pustet, 4th edn, 1960), pp. 190-91; Linnemann, *Parables*, pp. 141-42 n. 17; E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Oliphants, 2nd edn, 1974), p. 158; G.L. Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (ÖTKNT, 3.1; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1977), p. 247; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (TPINTC; London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), p. 464 (possibly); Nolland, *Luke*, p. 580; H.L. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, II (HTKNT, 3.1; Freiburg: Herder, 1994), pp. 136-40.

4. The main differences in the Lukan account are as follows: 1) the reply is given by the lawyer who is commended by Jesus, whereas in Mark it is the reverse; 2) the question has a more practical focus re attaining *eternal life*, in Mark it concerns the *greatest commandment*; 3) the two commandments are unified. For a full discussion of the relationship between the synoptic accounts, the textual variants and the relationship of the synoptics to the LXX, see J.L. Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (RNT; Regensburg: Pustet, 1977), pp. 344-46; I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), pp. 439-44; J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB, 28; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), II, p. 880.

5. G. Sellin, 'Lukas als Gleichniserzähler: Die Erzählung vom barmherzigen Samariter (Lk 10,25-37)', *ZNW* 66 (1975), pp. 20-23. Crossan (*In Parables*, p. 59, followed by W. Wink, 'The Parable of the Compassionate Samaritan: A Communal Exegesis Approach', *RevExp* 76 [1979], p. 207) argues unconvincingly that the parable of the Good Samaritan was also in Q, but was omitted by Matthew on the grounds of Mt. 10.5. J. Lambrecht ('The Message of the Good Samaritan [Lk 10:25-27]', *LouvStud* 5 [1974], pp. 124-25 considers that Luke redacted both Mark and Q to form an introduction to the parable.

6. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 441 (possibly); Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 877; W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THKNT, 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt), p. 207.

Luke recounts a separate incident.[7] The latter is possible if the keen rabbinic interest in the question of the greatest commandment[8] had its origins in this earlier period, as well as the likelihood that both Jesus and the lawyer reflect a contemporary norm of juxtaposing the two commandments regarding the love for God and one's neighbour (see below). This would then account, to some extent, for the differences in the way the commandments are worded in the three Gospels.[9] Nevertheless, having said this, Luke obviously understood the incident as a doublet, for he omits it at 20.40 when following the Markan outline.

This leaves the issue as to whether the lawyer's question reflects the original context for the parable which follows. At a literary level, vv. 25-28 and vv. 29-37 are united by the structure of: 1) question by the lawyer, prefaced by a reason for this question; 2) counter-question by Jesus; 3) answer by the lawyer; and 4) pronouncement by Jesus.[10] However, this structure can be evaluated not in terms of an original unity, but as evidence of a Lukan frame to knit the two episodes together.[11] The answer to the unity of the passage ultimately rests on

7. So T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1949), pp. 259-61; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 202; N.L. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), p. 310; W. Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke* (New Testament Commentaries; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 591; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 441; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 464.

8. See Str–B, I, pp. 900-905.

9. The matter is complicated by the fact that Matthew agrees with Luke in omitting the *Hear O Israel* formula, agrees with Mark in separating the two commandments, and disagrees with both Mark and Luke in omitting the fourth component ἰσχύος.

10. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 34; F.W. Horn, *Glaube und Handeln in der Theologie des Lukas* (GTA, 26; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), p. 109.

11. So Sellin, 'Barmherzigen Samariter', pp. 20, 59; Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 60; C.H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), p. 120. Linnemann (*Parables*, pp. 56-58) believes that in Luke's hand a scholastic dialogue (a test of a scholar's credentials [see *Parables*, p. 51 note a] has become a controversy dialogue, whereby an answer is given by a counter-question (see also R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* [New York: Harper & Row, 1963], pp. 39-54). The original unity of the passage is also denied by J.M.L. Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1942), p. 151; G. Eichholz, *Gleichnisse der Evangelien:*

two factors:[12] that Luke here recounts a separate incident to Mk 12.28-34, and that the parable actually answers the question of 'Who is my neighbour?' The former is at least a possibility, while the latter is generally accepted (see below).

The final introductory issue concerns the background to the parable itself. Some believe that it is based on a real incident;[13] however, Scott is probably correct in observing that here we are dealing with 'fictional verisimilitude'.[14] Others propose that the parable is based on 2 Chron. 28.8-15, where in response to the words of the prophet Oded, the Samaritans returned the captives of Judah to Jericho, providing them with food and drink and caring for the injured.[15] Notwithstanding that this passage may provide some of the imagery for v. 34, it is unlikely to be the sole source for the parable. Finally, some have seen the parable in its entirety as a Lukan creation. The arguments for this are not convincing,[16] and it will be seen not only that the parable is understandable

Form, Überlieferung, Auslegung (Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 3rd edn, 1979), p. 159; Scott, *Hear*, p. 191; Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 467.

12. W.R. Stenger ('The Parable of the Good Samaritan and Leviticus 18:5', in D.E. Groh and R. Jewett [eds.], *The Living Text* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985], pp. 27-38) argues that Lk. 10.25-37 is united by Jesus' use of Lev. 18.5, whereby the parable is told to elucidate the reference there to a non-Jew (i.e. *a man*) obeying the statutes of Yahweh and obtaining eternal life. However, not only is this based on an exegetical tradition of Lev. 18.5 that may not have been known to Jesus, it fails to appreciate that the parable is not about eternal life.

13. So A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Luke* (ICC; New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 5th edn, 1922), pp. 285-86 (who, in claiming that Jesus would not criticize priests and Levites, misses entirely the cutting edge of the parable); Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 203; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 311; Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 167.

14. Scott, *Hear*, p. 194 n. 21.

15. So F.H. Wilkinson, 'Oded: Proto-Type of the Good Samaritan', *ExpTim* 69 (1957–58), p. 94; J.D.M. Derrett, 'Law in the New Testament: Fresh Light on the Parable of the Prodigal Son', *NTS* 11 (1964–65), pp. 22-37; J.M. Furness, 'Fresh Light on Luke 10:25-37', *ExpTim* 80 (1968–69), p. 182. The most thorough and convincing arguments in this respect are provided by F.S. Spencer, '2 Chronicles 28:5-15 and the Parable of the Good Samaritan', *WTJ* 46 (1984), pp. 317-49; Aus, *Weihnachtsgeschichte*, pp. 59-125, who also links the story to traditions reflected in Job 6.21 (LXX) and *m. Yeb.* 16.7.

16. The two most thorough proposals in this regard are Sellin, 'Barmherzigen Samariter', pp. 35-45; and M.D. Goulder, *Luke: A New Paradigm* (JSNTSup, 20; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), II, pp. 487-92. Sellin believes that this parable contains a high concentration of Lukan words and phrases, and reflects a Lukan theol-

in a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*, but also that such a setting gives it a sharper cutting edge.

2. *Analysis*

The lawyer's inquiry as to the greatest commandment and Jesus' subsequent reply should not only be seen as an introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The dialogue is important in its own right.[17] First of all, it highlights Jesus' perspective on the requirements for eternal life and shows his understanding of the relationship between the law and his own teaching (cf. Mt. 5.17-19; Lk. 16.16-18). Second, the recording of this incident underlines Luke's positive view of Judaism and Jewish piety centered around observance of the law (1.6; 2.22-25; cf. Acts 10.2).

The lawyer stands as a mark of courtesy and addresses Jesus by the respectful title διδάσκαλε. However, it is clearly mock respect,[18] for Luke informs us that his underlying motive was to test Jesus rather than seek information. Possibly he was uneasy about Jesus' attitude to the law[19] and wanted to discredit him in public.[20] Besides the fact that all the New Testament uses of ἐκπειράζω have unfavourable connotations (Mt. 4.7; Lk. 4.12; 1 Cor. 10.9), Luke's readers have already been biased by 7.29-30, where the lawyers and Pharisees are cast in a negative light.

ogy whereby Samaritans, to the extent that they keep the law, form a bridge between Israel and the Gentiles. However, it is hard to understand the parable as making a theological statement about the role of Samaritans *per se*. It is a story about one man, not one man who represents a nation. (For a thorough critique of Sellin's proposal see Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 588-90). Goulder proposes that this and other parables of the Lukan *Sondergut* reflect common features and are vastly different to those in Matthew and Mark. In his more general article, 'Characteristics of the Parables in the Several Gospels', Goulder rejects as improbable the proposal that the various types of parables in the synoptic Gospels either originate with the historical Jesus, or that Jesus taught a form of such parables. Consequently he assigns all of the parables of the Lukan *Sondergut* to Luke himself. However, against Goulder, the Palestinian features of these parables take us back at least to the pre-Lukan tradition, and even heavy-handed redactional activity does not rule out Jesus as the original source for the parabolic material.

17. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 440.
18. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 35.
19. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 36.
20. Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 66.

If Luke has redacted the Markan account, the question τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω was probably formed in light of 18.18, where it is paralleled exactly by the question of the rich ruler. Nevertheless, as this was an issue that later concerned the rabbis,[21] it may have been a frequent question at this time as well.

Jesus then turns the question back on the lawyer, thereby implicitly inverting the challenge and claim to authority, and seeks his understanding[22] of the Torah. In this way, Jesus stresses the continuing validity of the law (cf. Lk. 16.17; Mt. 5.17-18).

In response, the lawyer cites the beginning of the Shema (Deut. 6.5), which a pious Jew would cite twice a day (*m. Ber.* 1.1-4). This demonstrates that he understood that love for God[23] and a total commitment to him[24] was the pivotal point of the Jewish faith. With this he conflates the Golden Rule—the love of one's neighbour as oneself (Lev. 19.18).[25]

It is unclear whether Judaism had juxtaposed these two commandments prior to Jesus. Evidence from the Pseudepigrapha (*T. Iss.* 5.2; *T. Dan* 5.3) is inconclusive due to uncertain textual history,[26] though the love of one's neighbour was integral to Jewish ethics prior to Jesus (Sir. 7.21; *Jub.* 7.20; 36.7-8). It is possible, then, that Luke and Mark record separate incidents where both the lawyer and Jesus reflect contemporary thought in this regard.

Jesus accepts the lawyer's answer, but exhorts him to practice such action in order to attain the eternal life that he seeks (v. 28). However, the lawyer seeks to regain the initiative by posing a further question

21. *b. Ber.* 28b. See Str–B, I, pp. 808-809.

22. πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις has been understood in different ways. Marshall (*Luke*, p. 443) and Kistemaker (*Parables*, p. 166) (following Jeremias) interpret the question as, *How do you read*? (i.e. reciting the law as part of regular worship). Derrett ('Good Samaritan', p. 34), C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, p. 46), and Nolland (*Luke*, p. 583) prefer *How do you understand/expound*?

23. Love for God is a Deuteronomic concept. See W.L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 25 (1963), pp. 77-87, who considers that it probably goes back to the formation of the covenant.

24. καρδία, ψυχή, ἰσχύς, and διάνοια should not be understood as four component parts, but as the sum total of the individual.

25. For Paul (Rom. 13.9; Gal. 5.14) and James (Jas 2.8) the love of one's neighbour is the summation of the law. This understanding would appear to be dependent upon the gospel tradition (Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 879).

26. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 879.

designed to clarify the identity of his neighbour.[27] In the LXX, ὁ πλησίον renders רע which was initially understood by the Jews to relate to any member of the covenant community, including the resident alien (Lev. 19.18, 33-34). However, by the time of Jesus far more narrow interpretations are evident.[28] The Pharisees arguably excluded the עם הארץ,[29] the Qumran community rejected outsiders (the *sons of darkness*—1QS 1.9-10; 2.24; 5.25; 1QM 1.1), Sir. 12.1-7 refuses help to the sinner, while a later midrash on Ruth claims that Gentiles, shepherds and the like are not neighbours.[30]

Luke again gives the motivation for the lawyer's question: he sought to justify himself. θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν could be taken in the sense of justifying his original question,[31] or an effort to regain lost honour.[32] More likely it represents an attempt to validate his practice to date (cf. 16.15).[33] The man is seeking a definition of neighbour that is narrow enough not to prove too costly at a personal level, yet broad enough to fulfil the requirements of the law. Of course his question implies that there can be a 'non-neighbour'.[34]

27. J.J. Kilgallen ('The Plan of the NOMIKOΣ [Luke 10:25-37]', *NTS* 42 [1996], pp. 615-190) argues that as the lawyer was prepared to answer his own initial question, the second question regarding the identity of his neighbour was the 'test'.

28. See J. Fichtner and H. Greevan, 'πλησίον', *TDNT*, VI, pp. 311-18; Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 202-203; J. Bowman, 'The Parable of the Good Samaritan', *ExpTim* 59 (1947–48), pp. 151-53; 248-49.

29. This is a disputed point. See the discussion in Chapter 8, note 2. The issue of the relationship between Jesus' concept of neighbour and that of his contemporaries is further discussed in Chapter 15, section 2a below.

30. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 40, quoting Lightfoot. See also Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 202.

31. So Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 152; R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1946), p. 602; Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 191; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 202; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 447; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 886; Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 67; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 469.

32. B.J. Malina and J.H. Neyrey, 'Honor and Shame in Luke–Acts', in J.H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke–Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), p. 51.

33. So Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 311; E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas übersetzt und erklärt* (NTD, 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 18th edn, 1982), p. 122; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 39; P.R. Jones, 'The Love Commandment in Parable: Luke 10:25-37', *PRS* 6 (1978), p. 239.

34. Derrett, 'Good Samaritan', p. 35.

In response, Jesus tells a parable which begins with the typically anonymous ἀνθρωπός τις (cf. 14.6; 15.11; 16.1, 19; 18.2; 19.12).[35] In this instance the man is a (Jewish) traveller from Jerusalem to Jericho, who suffers mistreatment at the hands of robbers.[36] This road was notorious for such a fate.[37] It descended approximately one thousand metres over twenty-eight kilometres (thus κατέβαινεν[38] is appropriate!) through desert and rocky terrain, and consequently provided an ideal hiding place for thieves.

The use of κατὰ συγκυρίαν (v. 31) may emphasize the remoteness of the place. It was only by chance that the injured man was seen at all. Possibly, however, it may relate to ἱερεύς τις. In this case, it was indeed fortunate that the first one to pass by was a man of authority, who would have the concerns of the people, especially the sick (cf. Lev. 12–15), at heart.[39] The priest was probably returning to his country residence after officiating at the temple.[40]

Nevertheless, contrary to expectations, when the priest saw the wounded man he passed by on the far side of the road. The priest's actions have long been the subject of conjecture. Maybe he simply lacked compassion, or feared ambush himself. Many have drawn atten-

35. For a discussion of this formula, see Sellin, 'Barmherzigen Samariter', pp. 175-89; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 592. Both conclude that it is pre-Lukan.

36. Josephus uses λῃστής about the Zealots and mentions that Essenes travelled with nothing but weapons because of a fear of thieves (*War* 2.8.4). Based on this and Talmudic references to the Essenes residing in Jericho, C. Daniel ('Les Essèniens et l'arrière-fond historique de la parabole du Bon Samaritain', *NovT* 11 [1969], pp. 71-104) proposes that the man is an Essene who was attacked by a Zealot, his political enemy. Jesus thereby wants to illustrate to the lawyer that even members of rival religious sects must be considered as neighbours. However, λῃστής need not have this sense and the man need not reside in Jericho.

37. See Josephus, *War.* 4.8.3; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 203; R. Beauvery, 'La route romaine de Jérusalem à Jéricho', *RB* 64 (1957), pp. 72-101; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 41-42. Strabo 16.2.40 mentions how Pompey defeated a stronghold of robbers near Jericho.

38. Against F. Mussner, 'Der Begriff des "Nächsten" in der Verkündigung Jesu: Dargelegt am Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter', in *Praesentia Salutis: Gesammelte Studien zu Fragen und Themen des Neuen Testamentes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1967), p. 127, it is not necessary that the imperfect has an iterative force.

39. Nevertheless, it seems that the priesthood was not an altogether respected profession in the time of Jesus. See Str–B, II, pp. 182-83; IV, pp. 334-52.

40. Jericho was one of the main country residences for priests officiating in Jerusalem (*b. Ta'an.* 27a). See Str–B, II, pp. 180-82.

tion to the laws regarding ritual purity, whereby a priest was faced with defilement by coming into contact with a corpse (Num. 5.2; 19.11-22). According to the Pentateuch, priests could only be defiled for a member of their immediate family (Lev. 21.1-3; cf. Ezek. 44.25-27), though even this exemption did not apply to the High Priest or the Nazirite (Lev. 21.11; *m. Naz.* 7.1). The Mishnah, however, allows both the latter to attend to a neglected corpse, though this was a point of dispute among the rabbis (*m. Naz.* 7.1). After a thorough analysis of the laws of defilement, Derrett believes that the law could be used to justify both courses of action.[41]

It has been argued that as the man was not dead, ritual defilement was not the issue.[42] However, as the man was left half-dead (ἡμιθανῆ), one would naturally infer that he could be mistaken as dead. Others have also noted that the direction of travel precluded any excuse. Preserving ritual purity should not have been a vital issue for one heading away from Jerusalem.[43] But this fails to appreciate the fact that preserving ritual purity was not the issue at all: the law actually forbade a priest to defile himself by contact with a corpse (Lev. 21.1-3).[44]

The next passerby was a Levite. The Levites were an order of officials, inferior in status to the priests, who performed minor cultic tasks. A Levite would have been less bound by ritual constraints,[45] but, like the priest, he opted to pass by[46] the injured man.

The story follows the typical triadic folklore pattern, where commonly a third example is different to the previous two (cf. Lk. 19.11-27). In this case the traveller on the road[47] is distinguished not only by

41. Derrett, 'Good Samaritan', pp. 24-29. See also Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 203.

42. So Str–B, II, p. 183.

43. Hendriksen, *Luke*, p. 594; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 232.

44. R. Bauckham, 'The Scrupulous Priest and the Good Samaritan: Jesus' Parabolic Interpretation of the Law of Moses', *NTS* 44 (1998), p. 479.

45. See Jeremias, *Jerusalem*, pp. 203-204; R. Meyer, 'λευ(ε)ίτης', *TDNT*, IV, pp. 239-41; Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 53. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, pp. 46-47) believes that the Levite must have been aware of the non-action of the priest (for people are visible on this road for some distance ahead) and did not want to disagree with his interpretation of the law. However, we are not privy to the motivation of either man.

46. If original, γενόμενος (A C W Θ Ψ f^{13}) implies that the Levite took a closer look than the priest.

47. It is difficult to accept the proposal of Patte (*Structural Exegesis*, p. 109) that the use of ὁδεύων (v. 33) implies that the Samaritan was travelling nowhere in

his response but by his identity, the latter being underlined by the emphatic position of Σαμαρίτης. This is a totally unexpected development in the story. A more natural progression would be priest-Levite-layman, whereby the audience might have expected an 'anti-clerical twist'.[48] However, the use of the Samaritan figure typifies the shock element found in many of Jesus' parables, and gives this parable its cutting edge. Thus, those who insist that the parable originally referred to an ordinary Jew misunderstand the full intention of Jesus,[49] for the priest/Levite and the Samaritan act as representatives of rival cults.[50]

For the Jews, Samaritans were schismatics, and in the first century the two were on less than good terms (cf. Lk. 9.52-54; Jn 4.9).[51] In 128 BCE the Jews, under John Hyrcanus, had attacked Samaria and destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.9.1; cf. Jn 4.20). The Samaritans reciprocated in 6–9 CE by defiling the Jerusalem temple by scattering bones around its precincts.[52] The animosity between the two nations is evidenced in the Mishnah: 'He that eats the bread of Samaritans is like to one that eats the flesh of swine' (*m. Šeb.* 8.10; cf. Sir. 50.25-26). The later talmudic literature even stated that a Jew need not save a Samaritan's life (*b. Sanh.* 57a).[53] Thus Jesus demonstrates extreme courage in telling this story.[54] It is also evidence of his own lack of prejudice, particularly given the rejection he previously encountered while passing through Samaria (9.51-56).[55] Of

particular, and thus could afford to interrupt his journey to aid the wounded man.

48. L. Morris, *Luke* (TNTC; London: IVP, 1974), p. 189. See also Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 204; D. Gewalt, 'Der "Barmherzige Samariter": Zu Lukas 10,25-37', *EvT* 38 (1978), pp. 415-17; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 47. M. Gourgues ('The Priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan Revisited: A Critical Note on Luke 10:31-35', *JBL* 117 [1998], pp. 709-13) notes that this expectation may have been due to the common designation of the nation as consisting of priests, Levites and the laity.

49. As do Creed, *St. Luke*, pp. 151-52; M.S. Enslin, 'The Samaritan Ministry and Mission', *HUCA* 51 (1980), pp. 34-36; Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, pp. 163-65.

50. So Derrett, 'Good Samaritan', p. 24.

51. See Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 204; *idem*, *Jerusalem*, pp. 352-58.

52. For an overview of the history of Samaria from Old Testament times to the present day, as well as a discussion of the Samaritan literary tradition, see N. Heutger, 'Die lukanischen Samaritanererzählungen in religionspädagogischer Sicht', in W. Haubeck and M. Backmann (eds.), *Wort in der Zeit* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), pp. 276-80.

53. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 15, Section 2a, below.

54. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 48.

55. Against J.S. Miller ('The Neighbour', *ExpTim* 96 [1984], p. 338), it is

course the shock of being confronted by a 'good' Samaritan is dramatically lessened for Luke's readers.[56] In this sense the story had far more impact in the original setting, where Jesus' hearers are confronted by the unmistakable and shocking irony that a Samaritan, whom they regarded as unfaithful to the Torah, was actually the only one of the three who obeyed it![57]

The Samaritan responded not just from a sense of duty, but with compassion.[58] His heart went out to the injured man. The aid he gave parallels that given by the Israelites to their Judean captives in 2 Chron. 28.8-15. He soothed and disinfected the man's wounds with olive oil and wine respectively,[59] and applied bandages. He then placed him on his animal[60] and led him to an inn, leaving enough money with the innkeeper for several days care and lodging[61] before continuing his journey. The emphatic ἐγώ stresses that the Samaritan would meet any shortfall in costs.[62]

hardly likely that Jesus used the term *Samaritan* for a backslidden Jew, as did the Jews regarding Jesus himself (Jn 8.48).

56. Although G. Downey ('Who is my Neighbour? The Greek and Roman Answer', *ATR* 47 [1965], pp. 3-15) points out that the parable would have been seen as a novelty in the Greco-Roman world, where philanthropic practice was ad hoc and restricted by class distinction.

57. Bauckham, 'Good Samaritan', pp. 487-88.

58. On the basis of word statistics (counting both words and verbs, M.J.J. Menken ('The Position of ΣΠΛΑΓΧΝΙΖΕΣΘ–ΑΙ and ΣΠΛΑΓΧΝΑ in the Gospel of Luke', *NovT* 30 [1988], pp. 107-14) shows how σπλαγχνίζομαι (v. 33) lies at the numerical centre of the pericope. Furthermore, he examines all uses of the verb (7.13; 15.20) and the cognate adjective (1.78) in this Gospel and finds a similar phenomenon. He concludes that this is evidence of a common literary technique, where the emphasis falls on the central word of the narrative or discourse. This is certainly an interesting proposal, which needs more research. If this was an accepted literary technique it would certainly be most time consuming!

59. The medical use of olive oil and wine is well attested (*m. Šab.* 19.2; Theophrastus, *Hist. Plant.* 9.11.1; cf. Isa. 1.6).

60. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 43) notes that the priest, as a member of the upper class, would also have been riding. Thus he cannot be excused on the grounds that he could do little to help.

61. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 205) and D.E. Oakman ('The Buying Power of Two Denarii: A Comment on Luke 10:35', *Forum* 3.4 [1987], pp. 33-38) point out that a day's lodging was worth approximately one-twelfth of a denarius. As innkeepers were not noted for their integrity, payment in advance ensured his care.

62. Derrett ('Good Samaritan', pp. 29-30) shows how the audience would realize that the Samaritan did not expect repayment, for according to laws of recom-

Continuing the question/counter-question structure, Jesus refers the lawyer to the parable to answer his own initial query. The lawyer gives the only possible answer,[63] and is told by Jesus to go[64] and follow the Samaritan's example.

The question often arises as to whether the parable answers the lawyer's original question. In the lesson drawn out by vv. 36-37, the neighbour has become the subject of the action, whereas the lawyer sought a definition in terms of an object of action. Nevertheless, rather than representing an ill-conceived illustration,[65] the parable explains that neighbourliness is reciprocal.[66] The Samaritan saw the wounded man as a neighbour and thus became a neighbour to him.

The parable can also be seen as a deliberate corrective to the original question,[67] and is consistent with the approach of Jesus elsewhere.[68]

pense he was unlikely to be reimbursed by the Jewish courts.

63. Against F. Godet, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), II, p. 42; Geldenhuys, *Saint Luke*, p. 314; R.W. Funk, '"How Do You Read?" A Sermon on Luke 10:25-37', *Int* 18 (1964), p. 58; Patte, *Structural Exegesis*, p. 111; and in agreement with Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 249; R. Kieffer, 'Analyse sémiotique et commentaire: Quelque réflexions à propos d'études de Luc 10.25-37', *NTS* 25 (1978–79), p. 457, the substitution of ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ for ὁ Σαμαρίτης should not be seen as a reluctance by the lawyer to personally identify the 'neighbour'. Rather, it helps keep the theme of the parable central.

64. σὺ is emphatic, with the present imperative ποίει signifying habitual action. Note also how ποίει ὁμοίως (v. 37) corresponds to τί ποίησας (v. 25) and τοῦτο ποίει καὶ ζήσῃ (v. 28), giving the entire passage an inner unity (so Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 72-74; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 231). Nolland (*Luke*, p. 582) sees this as a Lukan creation.

65. As in the quite erroneous view of M.S. Enslin ('Luke and the Samaritans', *HTR* 36 [1943], p. 287) and Lambrecht ('Samaritan', p. 133), who states that the shift is due to the 'accidental result of Luke's inattentiveness'. See also Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisse,* II, *Vol. 2*, p. 596, who felt that the parable lacked an inner logic.

66. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 205; N.H. Young, 'Once Again, Now, "Who Is My Neighbour?" A Comment', *EvQ* 49 (1977), pp. 178-79.

67. Ellis, *Luke*, p. 158; B. Reicke, 'Der barmherzige Samariter', in O. Böcher and K. Haacker (eds.), *Verborum Veritas* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), pp. 107-108; L. Ramaroson, 'Comme "Le bon Samaritain" ne chercher qu'à aimer (Lc 10,29-37)', *Bib* 56 (1975), pp. 534-35; Eichholz, *Gleichnisse*, p. 174; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 884; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 112; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 468. Funk ('Sermon', p. 57) perceptively states, 'When we understand the parable, we shall no longer be concerned with the question!'

68. Jesus often deals with the issue behind the question. This is seen in the episode with Simon the Pharisee (Lk. 7.36-50), the dispute concerning inheritance

Although the lawyer sought an empirical definition of neighbour, Jesus shows that it is an action that one performs. 'Love creates neighbourliness.'[69] In other words, neighbourliness is not a static relationship but is a created relationship. One *becomes*[70] a neighbour. Grundmann states it succinctly: 'to act as a neighbour and not to theorize about neighbours'.[71] Seen in this sense, a neighbour cannot be defined, for neighbourhood is a universal possibility.[72] The neighbour really is ἀνθρωπός τις.[73]

Thus the lawyer is invited to reflect on neighbourliness from the perspective of the man in the ditch, then reciprocate such action as the need arises.[74] Scott shows how, at a literary level, this is achieved by making the Samaritan the hero of the story. Faced with the unlikely scenario of identifying with a hero who is a schismatic, the original audience must then shift its identification to the injured man. Therefore the audience encounters neighbourliness which, in turn, enables it better to appreciate the definition of the idea. One can best ascertain the scope of neighbourliness when in a situation of dire need (cf. Lk. 6.31). This could not be achieved if the Samaritan was the one in the ditch.[75]

(Lk. 12.13-21), and the payment of tribute (Lk. 20.20-26). On the other hand, Sellin ('Barmherzigen Samariter', pp. 37-45) offers a proposal which does not accord with the teaching and practice of Jesus. He believes that the parable answers the question of who is my neighbour by defining it in terms of those, including non-Jews, who practise the law. Thus the Samaritan is a neighbour to the lawyer. However, given that Sellin sees the parable as a Lukan composition, Luke elsewhere presents Jesus as one who is willing to relate and be a neighbour to the marginalized and the 'sinners' (6.27-36; 14.15-24; 15.1-2; 19.1-10).

69. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 263.

70. The perfect infinitive γεγονέναι indicates that by his actions the Samaritan had attained the status of neighbour.

71. W. Grundmann, *Das Evanelgium nach Lukas* (THKNT, 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2nd edn, 1961), p. 224.

72. Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 115.

73. Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 122; Ramaroson, 'Samaritain', p. 535.

74. N.H. Young, 'The Command to Love your Neighbour as Yourself and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)', *AUSS* 21 (1983), pp. 268-72.

75. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 198-200, who then curiously rejects the unity of vv. 29-37. See also Nolland, *Luke*, p. 592. J.C. Gordon ('The Parable of the Good Samaritan [St. Luke x.25-37] A Suggested Re-orientation', *ExpTim* 56 [1944–45], pp. 302-304) and Funk ('Sermon', p. 57) both see this identification with the wounded man occurring at the outset. Scott's approach is eminently more helpful than the structuralist models proposed by G. Crespy, 'The Parable of the Good Samaritan: An

3. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Good Samaritan has had a long history of interpretation, including some detailed allegorical applications.[76] Such readings still persist in the present day. For example, Binder sees the injured man as Jesus, disregarded by the Jewish priesthood but accepted by Samaritans.[77] Similarly, Bailey believes that the parable can be read as a picture of salvation coming via Jesus the rejected outsider, in terms of costly, unexpected love. Furthermore, the story illustrates that attempts at self-justification cannot succeed.[78] On the basis of a wordplay between רע and רעה, Gerhardsson contends that the Samaritan is a metaphor for Jesus the Good Shepherd, who tends God's flock and binds their wounds.[79] Zimmermann, on the other hand, proposes that the parable was instigated by a reaction to Jesus' compassion for the despised, thereby justifying his own actions,[80] while Daniélou under-

Essay in Structural Research', *Semeia* 2 (1974) pp. 27-50, and D. Patte, 'An Analysis of Narrative Structure and the Good Samaritan', *Semeia* 2 (1974), pp. 1-26, where the actant diagrams diverge considerably. In fact, it is extremely difficult to fit this parable into such a model.

76. For a history of interpretation see W. Monselewski, *Der Barmherzige Samariter: Eine Auslegungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Lukas 10,25-27* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967); H.G. Klemm, *Das Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter: Grundzüge der Auslegung im 16./17. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973); R.H. Stein, 'The Interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan', in W.W. Gasque and W.S. LaSor (eds.), *Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 278-87. J.I.H. McDonald ('Alien Grace [Luke 10:30-36]', in V. Shillington [ed.], *Jesus and his Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997], pp. 35-51), while defending the interpretive stance of the Fathers to some extent, shows how such interpretations rob the parable of its moral force, instead becoming a story of legitimization for the Christian church.

77. H. Binder, 'Das Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter', *TZ* 15 (1959), pp. 191-92. Given the incident recorded in the previous chapter (9.51-56), it is difficult to accept that this parable shows how Jesus was accepted by the Samaritans.

78. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 55-56.

79. B. Gerhardsson, *The Good Samaritan—The Good Shepherd*? (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1958), supported by L.P. Trudinger, 'Once Again, Now, "Who is my Neighbour?"', *EvQ* 48 (1976), pp. 162-63.

80. H. Zimmermann, 'Das Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter: Lk 10,25-37', in G. Bornkamm and K. Rahner (eds.), *Die Zeit Jesu* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970), pp. 66-67. However, this does not explain the use of the Samaritan. Moreover, the

stands it as a parable of the post-fall human condition, in which human beings are stripped of their original state, wounded in the natural faculties, and left half dead.[81]

Although some of the above proposals are ingenious, most are anachronistic and misunderstand the parable as a treatise on eternal life. In fact, the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches a straightforward lesson about neighbourliness, and is no less an example story for being told from the perspective of the wounded man.[82] Nevertheless, the parable is more than an example story, a fact evidenced by the choice of characters, in particular the Samaritan as the hero.

Taking this into account, the parable is also a powerful attack on racial prejudice, though admittedly this is not as evident for Luke's readers who do not share the perspective of the original audience. Jesus shows how the Samaritan crossed racial and religious gulfs to act as a neighbour to the afflicted man. This, in turn, says something about how kingdom values transcend and heal past ethnic rifts (cf. Eph. 2.14).[83] Indeed, it may also be seen as an allusion to Ezek. 37.15-28. Jesus is the king who breaks down the barriers between Ephraim and Judah.[84]

Thus the parable accords with the teachings and actions of Jesus elsewhere. He was prepared to associate with, and receive attention from, those deemed to be outcasts (Lk. 5.29-32; 7.36-39; 15.1-2; 19.1-10).[85] What is more, he constructed a story such as this after being per-

parable fits the given setting perfectly.

81. J. Daniélou, 'Le bon Samaritain', in *Mélanges bibliques: Rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957), pp. 457-65.

82. Against Nolland, *Luke*, p. 597.

83. Crossan (*In Parables*, pp. 55-64; see also a more general article by Crossan, 'Parable and Example in the Teaching of Jesus', *NTS* 18 [1971–72], pp. 285-307) understands the parable not as an example story, but as a parable of reversal, where the arrival of the kingdom upturns existing conventions. For the Jews, this involves a re-evaluation of their opinions of Samaritans. Grace comes to those who do not expect it (see also Funk, *Parables and Presence*, pp. 29-24). While demonstrating some good insights (i.e. why the Samaritan is not the man in the ditch), the parable is only indirectly a kingdom parable. Moreover, it seems that Crossan attempts to force the parable into a prior framework.

84. Wenham, *Parables*, pp. 159-60.

85. Against Lambrecht ('Samaritan', pp. 128-29), this does not mean that Jesus told the parable primarily as a defence of his actions in the face of criticism from the religious authorities (cf. 15.1-3). While this effect might have been achieved indirectly, it has been argued above that the setting given by Luke provides a plausible backdrop for the parable.

sonally rebuffed by the Samaritans (9.51-52). Consequently, the parable teaches that being a neighbour is a willingness to show mercy to all and receive it from all, regardless of ethnic or social ties.[86]

Understood in these terms, and examined in its Lukan setting, the parable functions for Luke as a further expression of the concern of God for the despised and marginalized. Thus, while for Luke a secondary concern may have been to legitimize the Samaritan mission, the prime focus of the story is to give teaching regarding 'missionpraxis'.[87]

Closely aligned to the above, the parable is a powerful statement regarding priorities when certain aspects of Torah appear to clash. Purity may be an issue, but the overriding demand of the law in Jesus' eyes is to fulfil the love commandment.[88] Concern for others must, therefore, supersede cultic and religious obligations, a truth evident in Jesus' healing on the sabbath (Lk. 6.6-11; 13.10-17) and his outrage against the misuse of the Corban vow (Mk 7.1-13).[89] This is not to say that Jesus (and Luke) are against the law, but respect it only as it is expressed in a non-particularist, practical piety.[90]

Here we see the character of God below the surface of the parable. Derrett and Bailey have shown how the story can be understood as a midrash on Hos. 6.6 (cf. Isa. 58.5-9; Mic. 6.6-8), where the prophet rejects rote observance of the cult in favour of mercy and compassion as the ultimate concern of Yahweh. This is underlined by the actions of the Samaritan in our parable, where oil and wine are not used for cultic purposes[91] but for attending to the needs of his neighbour.[92]

86. R.A.J. Gagnon, 'A Second Look at Two Lukan Parables: Reflections on the Unjust Steward and the Good Samaritan', *HBT* 20 (1998), p. 9, states it well: '...one will be more inclined to expand the definition of "neighbour" to the broadest degree when one visualises others as potential allies in one's own moments of distress'.

87. Reicke, *Barmherzige Samariter*, p. 108.

88. Bauckham, 'Good Samaritan', pp. 475-89.

89. W.J. Masson, 'The Parable of the Good Samaritan', *ExpTim* 48 (1936-37), pp. 179-81.

90. E.J. Tinsley, 'Parables and the Self-Awareness of Jesus', *ChQ* 4 (1971), p. 20; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 114; J.I.H. McDonald, 'The View from the Ditch—and Other Angles: Interpreting the Parable of the Good Samaritan', *SJT* 49 (1996), pp. 21-37.

91. See Lev. 23.13, where oil and wine are part of the burnt offering.

92. Derrett, 'Good Samaritan', pp. 31-32; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 49-50. See also Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 133.

The latter point also links to another common Lukan theme: the proper use of wealth and possessions. Though this is not the major focus of the story, the Samaritan can be seen as one who used his goods (oil, wine, donkey and money) to aid others (cf. 12.21, 32-34; 16.8-9). Here, however, we see an extension of Luke's understanding of charity. Charity is more than almsgiving; it is a costly involvement of self in the lives of those in need.

Finally, the parable not only echoes the desire of God for human behaviour toward one's fellow, the Samaritan reflects the mercy of God himself (cf. Lk. 1.50, 54, 58, 72, 78; 7.13). This does not mean that the Samaritan is a metaphor for God, but that he mediates God's concern to bind up the wounds of the afflicted (Jer. 30.17; Hos. 6.1-6). In this way, Christian disciples are called to mirror the concerns and character of God, a character that is supremely manifest in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Chapter 4

THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT (11.5-8)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Friend at Midnight is a brief but deceptively intricate story of a person who seeks some bread from a neighbour in order to feed an unexpected guest. The parable is found in a section on prayer (11.1-13), framed by two Q logia: the Lord's Prayer (11.1-5),[1] to which it is linked by ἄρτος, and Asking the Father (11.9-13), with which it shares the motif of knocking.[2] In fact, based on the smooth flow of thought between the three sections, there have been suggestions that the parable itself belonged to Q.[3] However, this has not won widespread support. It is also possible to trace a line of thought to the lawyer's question in 10.25-28. The parable of the Good Samaritan addresses the

1. D.R. Catchpole ('Q and the "Friend at Midnight" [Luke xi. 5-8/9]', *JTS* 34 [1983], pp. 419-24) argues that 11.1-4 functions as the heading for the parabolic material that follows in 11.5-13. This is seen in the introduction of the motifs of fatherhood, petition, gift, and bread as the basic necessity of life.

2. Although Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 128) and Herzog (*Subversive Speech*, p. 196) point out that in Palestinian village life a neighbour would call out rather than knock, the general idea is present in both sections.

3. So Catchpole, 'Friend', pp. 416-24; Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 115. Catchpole proposes that, shorn of 11.8a (which is redactional), 11.5-8 originally led into Mt. 7.7 par. Lk. 11.9, which, in turn, provided the theological link to the parable. Seen in this way, vv. 5-9 and vv. 10-13 both make the same essential point, the latter in terms of a father–son relationship and the former in terms of friendship. Luke then omitted Mt. 6.7-8, which (with the link word χρεία) stood at the head of the section, for it was in apparent conflict with the teaching of the parable. The major difficulty with this proposal is that it relies on a particular understanding of ἀναίδεια (v. 8) that is far from certain. Additional criticisms have been made by C.M. Tuckett, 'Q, Prayer, and the Kingdom', *JTS* 40 (1989), pp. 367-76, though not all are justified. See also Catchpole's response to Tuckett in *JTS* 40 (1989), pp. 377-88.

issue of the love of one's neighbour, whereas love for God is taken up by the Mary and Martha episode (10.38-40—listening to Jesus) and this section on prayer.

The Friend at Midnight has a number of affinities with the parable of the Judge and the Widow (18.1-8). Both parables concern one who is seeking help, with help granted on the basis of self-interest and/or persistence/boldness. A κόπος theme is also evident, as is an *a fortiori* argument. However, the two main differences are that 11.5-8 is framed as a rhetorical question, and is a self-contained story needing no interpretive comment. Given these differences, it is unlikely that 11.5-8 and 18.1-8 were originally a *Doppelgleichnis*.[4] In fact, it will be shown that the tendency to construe 11.5-8 in light of 18.1-8 has led to faulty interpretation.

2. *Analysis*

The parable begins with the formula τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν (cf. 11.11; 12.25; 14.28; 15.4; 17.7), which introduces a Semitic conditional construction that includes the whole of vv. 5-7. The syntax is awkward, with a number of paratactic clauses. The effect is rhetorical, though it is unclear at this point whether agreement or rejection is intended.[5] The parable poses a scenario between a petitioner and a householder, though it is unclear which of the two is the φίλος. The problem might have been solved in v. 8, but both δώσει and αὐτῷ are framed in the third person. The probability of φίλος relating to the petitioner in v. 5[6] is increased by the fact that it most likely does so in v. 7. Nevertheless, this not only leaves an awkward shift of subject between ἔξει and πορεύσεται (v. 5), it makes κἀκεῖνος quite clumsy (v. 8). In addition, taking the φίλος as the householder better facilitates the referents, where God is

4. As suggested by Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 233. W. Ott (*Gebet und Heil: Die Bedeutung der Gebetsparänese in der lukanischen Theologie* [SANT, 12; Munich: Kösel, 1965], pp. 23-29, 71-72, followed by Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 226-30) proposes that the two parables were from separate traditions but linked in L by the redactional 11.8. Again, however, this proposal requires that a disputed meaning be assigned to ἀναίδεια in 11.8.

5. In the other uses of this formula cited above, all expect a negative response (except perhaps 15.4 which is disputed—see the discussion there).

6. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 158; Creed, *Saint Luke*, p. 157; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 911 (also NEB).

the householder and the friend of the petitioner.[7] Thus it seems that φίλος should relate to the householder.

The parable presents a typical Palestinian village setting,[8] where there were no shops in the villages and baking was done in batches in the community oven. It would therefore be common knowledge who had baked recently.[9] The three loaves requested may have been quite small, enough for a meal for a single person.[10] However, Middle Eastern customs demand generous hospitality,[11] and a host might well provide excess as a mark of respect.[12]

Verse 7 functions as the apodosis of the rhetorical structure. The point is to question whether the response of the householder to the petitioner is conceivable. First, he fails to return the complimentary greeting φίλε. Second, he is angry at the intrusion (μή μοι κόπους πάρεχε). Third, it is too much of an inconvenience for him to get up, for he would disturb his family (who probably shared a sleeping mat in a single room).[13] Furthermore, the door needed to be unlocked, which

7. So E. Güttgemanns, 'Struktural-generative Analyse der Parabel "Vom bittenden Freund" (Lk 11,5-8)', *LB* 2 (1970), p. 9; Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 126; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 464; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 623; L.T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina, 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 124-25 (also KJV, NASB, NIV, RSV). Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, pp. 124-25) notes the parallel structure to 17.7, where the hearer is the subject of the main verb. It is difficult to agree with G. Bornkamm, '"Bittet, suchet, klopfert an": Predigt über Luk. 11,5-13 gehalten im Universitätsgottesdienst zu Heidelberg', *EvT* 13 (1953), pp. 1-5, who regards God as the petitioner who perseveres with humanity.

8. Goulder (*Luke*, pp. 498-99) believes that the setting could well be middle class, for nothing in the parable indicates a Palestinian environment. The parable has been composed by Luke on his favourite theme of prayer. However, the awkward Semitic construction of vv. 5-7 argues against Lukan composition.

9. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 122, who disagrees with Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 157, that bread would be baked by each household in the morning.

10. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 157; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 234; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 275. Plummer (*Saint Luke*, p. 299) and Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 911) attach no significance to the number at all.

11. *b. Šab.* 127a states, 'Hospitality to a guest is as great as early attendance at the Beth Hamidrash'.

12. So Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 121-23, who points out that the bread (which must be an unbroken loaf) was not the meal itself, but simply the 'knife and fork'.

13. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 157; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 465; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 912. Lenski (*Saint Luke*, p. 626) takes μετ' ἐμοῦ not in the sense of 'in the same bed', but 'in bed also'.

was not only difficult considering that it was probably secured by a wooden or iron bolt, but the noise would further disturb the family.[14] His final οὐ δύναμαι is equivalent to *I will not*![15]

Based on what follows in v. 8, together with the demands of Oriental hospitality, it seems clear that the audience would have been shocked by such a suggestion. Not even a locked door is a barrier to the demands of honour and hospitality (cf. Prov. 3.28-29).[16] In addition, in the Middle East a visitor is seen as a guest of the entire village, and it is the responsibility of the village to supply what is required.[17] Consequently, v. 7 is not to be taken as what the householder did say, but what he theoretically might have said.[18]

The originality of v. 8 has been questioned.[19] On the one hand, if v. 7 indicates an actual refusal by the householder, then v. 8 is essential to complete the parable and show his change of heart. On the other hand, if, as it seems, we are to understand v. 7 as merely hypothetical, then v. 8 is less necessary. However, there is a logical flow of thought between the two verses, for v. 8 explains why the audience is shocked.[20] There is no way that such a request would be refused, if not out of friendship,[21] then certainly because of *shamelessness*.

14. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 157; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 464-65; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 624. However, Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 124) argues that the door would not have been difficult to open. Thus the excuses are ridiculous and humorous.

15. So Manson, *Sayings*, p. 267; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 158.

16. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 158; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 326; Scott, *Hear*, pp. 86-91; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 275; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 624. This would tend to rule out the interpretation of Ellis, *Luke*, p. 163), who proposes that the audience would be shocked by the outrageous petition.

17. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 120-24.

18. Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 198. Catchpole ('Friend', p. 413) shows how this possible misunderstanding has been fed by the response of the judge in 18.2-5, especially given the common use of κόπος.

19. The most developed arguments are presented by Catchpole ('Friend', pp. 407-24) and Scholz (*Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 226-30), who believe that v. 8a has been composed in light of 18.2-5. However, as will shortly be seen, this relies on a disputed interpretation of the parable.

20. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 623.

21. εἰ καὶ can be construed as *although*, indicating that friendship may not suffice (so Plummer, *Saint Luke*, p. 299), or as *even if*, signifying that it most probably would. The latter fits better with the rhetorical construction (so Nolland, *Luke*, p. 625). Note also that διὰ τὸ εἶναι φίλος αὐτοῦ, athough ambiguous, gives a clear enough sense. It points to mutual friendship (so Marshall, *Luke*, p. 465).

This raises the perplexing issue of the precise nuance of ἀναίδεια (lit. *shamelessness*), which is often translated by *persistence*, thereby indicating a positive quality in the petitioner.[22] Loisy epitomizes this interpretation in stating, 'In order to be listened to by God it suffices to bother him for enough time'.[23] The problem with this rendering of ἀναίδεια is that all uses of the word and its cognates in classical Greek[24] and the papyri[25] portray a negative quality, something that contravenes an established norm. The same applies to Josephus[26] and the LXX,[27] with the possible exception of Jer. 8.5, where ἀποστροφὴν ἀναιδῆ may indicate either a *perpetual* or *shameless apostasy*. While the idea of intensive petitioning does appear in connection with this word group in Sir. 40.28-30 (cf. Josephus, *War* 6.119), the focus is still entirely negative.[28]

22. So RSV; NRSV; KJV; NASB; M.-J. Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Luc* (Paris: Gabalda, 2nd edn, 1921), pp. 325-26; D. Buzy, 'L'ami importun (Saint Luc, xi, 5-10)', *RevApol* 51 (1930), pp. 309-10; A.C.R. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1958), p. 188; W. Manson, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930), pp. 136-37; Godet, *St. Luke*, II, p. 56; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 234; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 163; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 366; Eichholz, *Gleichnisse*, p. 33; Hendriksen, *Luke*, pp. 612, 616; Morris, *Luke*, p. 195; Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, p. 226; R.R. Rickards, 'The Translation of Luke 11:5-13', *BT* 28 (1977), pp. 241-42; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 912; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 132-33; Perkins, *Parables*, pp. 194-95; Petzke, *Sondergut*, p. 115. Note the addition to the beginning of v. 8 in the Old Latin manuscripts: *et si ille perseveraverit pulsans*. Ott (*Gebet und Heil*, pp. 29-31, 102) also favours *persistence*, arguing that the parable is directed against the Jewish restriction on frequent prayer lest one weary God. On the latter, see Chapter 15, Section 2e below. Heininger (*Metaphorik*, pp. 98-101, 107) contends that ἀναίδεια clearly means *persistence* when 11.8 is seen as a Lukan composition, for Luke interpreted the story in the same sense as 18.1-8. However, this is circular reasoning. There are no valid reasons to regard 11.8 as secondary, and even if it is, there is no guarantee that Luke intended his readers to apply the parable in an identical manner to 18.1-8.

23. Loisy, *Luc*, p. 318: 'il suffit, pour être exaucé, d'ennuyer Dieu assez longtemps'.

24. LSJ, p. 105.

25. MM, p. 33.

26. For a summary of the usages in Josephus, see A.F. Johnson, 'Assurance for Man: The Fallacy of Translating *ANAIDEIA* by "Persistence" in Lk. 11:5-8', *JETS* 22 (1979), p. 127; Catchpole, 'Friend', pp. 409-10.

27. For a discussion, see Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 125-26; Catchpole, 'Friend', p. 409.

28. For a complete discussion of the literary evidence, see Bailey, *Poet and*

Not only is the translation *persistence* problematic given the external evidence, it also imposes a foreign element on the story. It is often assumed that Luke himself is the culprit, giving the parable this slant by drawing on 11.9-13 and the parable of the Judge and the Widow (18.1-8).[29] However, this is a rather strange argument for two reasons. First, it wrongly assumes that Luke intended the above meaning for ἀναίδεια. Second, there is nothing in the surrounding context to indicate persistence in prayer, for the present-tense verbs of vv. 9-10 should be taken as gnomic, not iterative.[30] Persistence is the theme given by later Christian tradition, but not necessarily by Luke. Finally, we should reject the rendering *persistence* because it wrongly implies that the householder initially refused the request. Not only does this fail to appreciate the thrust of the rhetoric in vv. 5-7, it runs aground theologically when applied to prayer, for it implies that God initially refuses, but changes his mind in response to persistence.

Another option is to keep the basic meaning of ἀναίδεια, but to take it in the sense of the boldness, or lack of shame, of the request.[31] Such an interpretation then fits the Lukan context of approaching God confidently in prayer. However, if the request is indeed culturally appropriate, the use of a word that normally indicates the opposite is difficult to imagine. Stemming from a proposal by Fridrichsen,[32] quite

Peasant, pp. 125-32; Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 125-31; K. Snodgrass, '*Anaideia* and the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:8)', *JBL* 116 (1997), pp. 505-13.

29. As do Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 105, 157-59; Catchpole, 'Friend', pp. 416-24; Herzog, *Subversive Speech*, p. 196.

30. In agreement with Marshall, *Luke*, p. 467; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 630; and against Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 159-60, who mentions a gnomic sense, but still interprets the word in terms of persistence.

31. So NEB; NIV; A.D. Martin, 'The Parable Concerning Hospitality', *ExpTim* 37 (1925–26), pp. 411-14; Lenski, *Saint Luke*, p. 625; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 326; D.L. Tiede, *Luke* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), p. 214; K. Berger, 'Materialen zu Form und Überlieferungsgeschichte neutestamentlicher Gleichnisse', *NovT* 15 (1973), pp. 33-36; Schneider, *Lukas*, pp. 259-60; J.D.M. Derrett, 'The Friend at Midnight: Asian Ideas in the Gospel of St. Luke', in C.K. Barrett *et al.* (eds.), *Donum Gentilicium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 83-85; Wiefel, *Lukas*, p. 217; Wenham, *Parables*, p. 181; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 276; D. Gooding, *According to Luke: A New Exposition of the Third Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Leicester: IVP, 1987), p. 220. Donahue (*Gospel in Parable*, pp. 185-87) and L.T. Johnson (*Luke*, p. 178), opt for both *boldness* and *persistence*.

32. A. Fridrichsen, 'Exegetische zum neuen Testament', *Symbolae Osloenses* 13 (1934), pp. 38-46.

widespread support has been found for relating ἀναίδεια to the householder.[33] Seen in this sense, he grants the request because of the need to avoid shame. Or, to state it another way, he acts out of a sense of honour, not wanting to lose the respect of the wider community.[34] The problem is then to explain the apparent shift from a negative to a positive meaning for ἀναίδεια. One possibility arises from a study of the root word αἰδώς, which can mean either *a sense of shame* (positive quality) or *shame* (negative quality). ἀναίδεια normally negates the first, thus giving a negative quality of *a lack of a sense of shame* (i.e. *shamelessness).* Possibly, however, the alpha privative was meant to negate the second meaning, giving the positive sense of *a lack of shame*. Thus the householder acts to avoid shame.[35] Finally, however, this interpretation must overcome the quite awkward αὐτοῦ, which tends to indicate that ἀναίδεια is a quality possessed, not one that is trying to be avoided.[36] Furthermore, although the first αὐτοῦ in v. 8 is ambiguous, the antecedent can be seen as the petitioner, with φίλον

33. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 158; Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 125-32; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 465; E.W. Huffard, 'The Parable of the Friend at Midnight: God's Honour or Man's Persistence?', *ResQ* 21 (1978), pp. 154-60; Scott, *Hear*, p. 91; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 625-26. N. Levison ('Importunity? [Lc. 11,8]', *Exp* 9.3 [1925], pp. 456-60) proposes that the word means *strengthen*. Thus the householder grants the request in order to strengthen or encourage the petitioner. However, this rendering of ἀναίδεια cannot be maintained. Herzog (*Subversive Speech*, pp. 212-14) manages to retain the proper sense of ἀναίδεια, but shifts the perspective. The householder is shameless from the point of view of the social elite, who only exercise hospitality as a show of status. To render hospitality out of kindness or honour was, for them, shameless. However, one is left with the impression that Herzog has forced the parable into a preconceived framework. There is no evidence that the setting he proposes for the parable is more valid than that given by Luke.

34. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 121) and Scott (*Hear*, p. 91), are correct in arguing that there are two possible nuances for ἀναίδεια here, positive and negative. The householder may act because he is honourable, or in order to avoid shame. Nevertheless, these are two sides of the one coin, and for the purposes of interpreting the parable it makes little difference.

35. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 132; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 625-26, who adds that this meaning could be attached to the petitioner, indicating the householder's desire to avoid shame to his visitor.

36. Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 912) argues that the presence of the second αὐτοῦ in v. 8 supports the reading of *persistence*, for it must correspond to the first αὐτοῦ which relates to the petitioner. However, the first αὐτοῦ is ambiguous and could relate to either player.

being the householder (thus corresponding to v. 5). In this case, Bailey's contention that the chiastic structure of v. 8 requires that ἀναίδεια relate to the householder does not apply.[37]

It is difficult to decide between the above options, though both internal and external evidence would tend to rule out *persistence*. The context favours *boldness* (i.e. his shameless request), with this description related primarily to the time of the petition, not the petition itself. This is particularly so if Bailey is correct in arguing that midnight is an unusual time for a visitor to arrive, for in Palestine and Lebanon sea breezes make travel by day quite bearable.[38] Thus the householder grants the request because his neighbour is obviously in dire need to seek assistance at such a time. Taken in this way, ἀναίδεια does not have a positive focus,[39] but a playful, negative intention, a use that has an interesting parallel in *Herm. Vis.* 3.3.1-2; 3.7.5, where Hermas's bold or audacious nature (ἀναιδής) is the basis for his receiving further revelation.[40]

3. *Interpretation*

Although the simple introduction καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς indicates that the original context has been lost, the parable is obviously about prayer. However, a specific application is lacking, and is dependent to some extent on the understanding of the problematic ἀναίδεια. Following the interpretation outlined above, the main focus is boldness in approaching God in prayer. This is highlighted by the surrounding context, the 'our Father' (11.2) and the exhortations to prayer in 11.9-13.

Of course, such exhortations are based upon the character of God. In this way the parable argues *a fortiori*. If an unwilling neighbour will still grant a request for bread at midnight, how much more will God answer the requests of his children (cf. 11.11-13), even in an extreme situation. Thus the believer can pray with confidence and assurance.

37. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 128.

38. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 121.

39. Against Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 129.

40. Berger, 'Materialien', pp. 33-36, who consequently argues that the motif of shamelessness in prayer stems from the apocalyptic tradition.

Chapter 5

THE RICH FOOL (12.13-21)

1. *Introduction*

While continuing the motif of judgment and accountability that runs from 12.1 to 13.9, the parable of the Rich Fool picks up Luke's favourite theme of wealth and possessions. The material in 12.13-21 belongs to the Lukan *Sondergut*,[1] and is used as an introduction to some Q sayings regarding the need to trust God for daily needs (12.22-31), and more sayings regarding wealth (12.32-34). The theme is then reintroduced in ch. 16.

The question also arises as to the original unity of Lk. 12.13-21. Most consider that vv. 13-14 reflect a separate saying, with v. 15 adapted by Luke to form the transition to the parable.[2] However, we are then faced with the need to explain what possible value vv. 13-14 had in the tradition while circulating as an independent logion. Moreover, the parable is then left without a context.[3] In addition, Derrett has shown that the parable fits vv. 13-14, for it instructs heirs of the kingdom about the appropriate attitude to wealth and possessions.[4]

1. Marshall (*Luke*, pp. 521-22), noting that a similar theme to Lk. 12.13-21 is used in Mt. 6.19 as an introduction to the saying regarding storing up treasure, considers that Lk. 12.13-21 could be Q material omitted by Matthew. However, although Mt. 6.19 captures the lesson from the parable of the Rich Fool, the fact that Lk. 12.33 reflects a saying somewhat similar to Mt. 6.19 (probably Q, though it is possible that an independent version of the saying existed in L—see Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 262; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 691) makes it difficult to use the latter as evidence that Matthew knew this parable.

2. So Bultmann, *History*, pp. 23, 55; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 165; Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 218; Eichholz, *Gleichnisse*, p. 181; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 968; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 520; Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 107-10; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 683-84.

3. So Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 270-71; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 396.

4. J.D.M. Derrett, 'The Rich Fool: A Parable of Jesus Concerning Inheritance', in *Studies in the New Testament*, II (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), pp. 102-103. In any

The introduction and a watered-down version of the parable of the Rich Fool appear in the *Gospel of Thomas* as independent logia, though most consider them to be dependent upon the Lukan version.[5] Similar teaching is also found in the Old Testament and Jewish literature (Ps. 49; Sir. 11.19-20; 31.5-11; Tob. 4.5-11; 12.6-10; *1 En.* 97.1-10[6] [cf. Jas 1.11; 4.13-16]) and numerous writings in the Greco-Roman world.[7] The theme of the parable was, therefore, well known to the audience of Jesus.

2. *Analysis*

Once more an interjection by one of the crowd instigates parabolic teaching (cf. 10.25; 14.15; 9.57; 11.27; 13.23). The man wanted Jesus to intervene in a family dispute and settle the matter of the inheritance between him and his brother. Such disputes were normally settled by an appeal to the rabbis on the basis of existing law (*m. B. Bat.* 8.1–9.10; cf. Num. 27.1-11; Deut. 21.15-18).[8] The man addresses Jesus as διδάσκαλε, thereby acknowledging his authority. However, his request

event, it is difficult to agree with Scott (*Hear*, p. 129) that the parable has nothing to do with the question regarding inheritance.

5. Though lending some support to the view that Lk. 12.13-14 was originally separate from the parable, this is not conclusive. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 968. For a discussion of the *Gospel of Thomas* version see T. Baarda, 'Luke 12:13-14: Text and Transmission from Marcion to Augustine', in J. Neuser (ed.), *Christianity, Judaism and other Greco-Roman Cults* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), I, pp. 121-55, who argues against the view of G. Quispel that *Gos. Thom.* §72 reflects a separate tradition. Rather, it represents a gnostic interpretation of the Lukan parable, stressing withdrawal from worldly matters (see also Eichholz, *Gleichnisse*, pp. 182-83).

6. See S. Aalen, 'St. Luke's Gospel and the Last Chapters of 1 Enoch', *NTS* 13 (1966–67), pp. 1-13; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Riches, the Rich, and God's Judgment in 1 Enoch 92–105 and the Gospel according to Luke', *NTS* 25 (1978–79), pp. 324-44.

7. E.W. Seng ('Der reiche Tor: Eine Untersuchung von Lk. xii,16-21 unter besonderer Berücksicktigung form- und motivgeschichtlicher Aspekte', *NovT* 20 [1978], pp. 142-50) examines parallels to this story. See also A.J. Malherbe, 'The Christianization of a *Topos* (Luke 12:13-34)', *NovT* 38 (1996), pp. 123-35, who focuses particularly on parallels with Dio Chrysostom.

8. In contrast to Roman law where all parties had to agree, the rabbis stated that if one heir wanted to divide the inheritance then it should proceed. See D. Daube, 'Inheritance in Two Lukan Pericopes', *ZSSR* 72 (1955), pp. 326-34; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 59; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 522.

betrays his true motive. He is not seeking an impartial decision, but wants to use Jesus for his own purposes.

The use of the vocative ἄνθρωπε in the reply of Jesus carries a sense of incredulity and contempt (cf. 22.58, 60). The dispute has nothing to do with him. This is not so much an admission by Jesus that he has no legal standing as a rabbi, but that he has different concerns and priorities, a fact also evident in his striking response to the question about payment of tax (Mk 12.13-17).[9]

The use of μεριστής recalls the incident between Moses and two of his fellow Israelites (Exod. 2.14). The fact that Stephen twice mentions this event (Acts 7.27, 35) may indicate that it held a popular place in the tradition. However, the vocabulary of the LXX and Acts 7.27, 35 is different to Lk. 12.14,[10] and it seems tenuous to conclude that Jesus is here disclaiming the role of Moses.[11] Bailey, in fact, prefers a more literal rendering of μεριστής. Jesus does not divide but reconciles. He does not want to finalize an already broken relationship.[12] However, this is not the point being made. Rather, Jesus wants to use the authority conceded to him to direct his hearers' attention to matters of discipleship.[13]

The wisdom saying of v. 15 is introduced by two imperatives (ὁρᾶτε / φυλάσσεσθε) which form a hendiadys. The present tense emphasizes

9. T. Gorringe ('A Zealot Option Rejected? Luke 12:13-14', *ExpTim* 98 [1987], pp. 267-70) proposes that here Jesus is rejecting a Zealot request to restore the inheritance (i.e. land) of Israel. In support, he argues that: 1) ὄχλος (12.13) has a political slant, representing a 'national eschatology'; 2) κληρονομία is a word that echoes the division of the land (Josh. 13.7; Ezek. 47.14 LXX); and 3) μεριστής recalls the role of Joshua, a role that Jesus rejects. However, the detailed legislation of *m. B. Bat.* 8.1–9.10 shows that such an incident can be adequately explained in terms of a personal grievance. Moreover, Gorringe is incorrect in contending that Jesus avoids moral concerns, for Jesus is quick to grasp an opportunity to teach regarding the moral demands of kingdom living, in particular simplicity and sharing.

10. Exod. 2.14 LXX and Acts 7.27, 35 read ἄρχοντα καὶ δικαστήν, thereby explaining, to some extent, the variant readings. For a discussion of the textual problems see Baarda, 'Luke 12:13-14', pp. 107-62, who concludes that Marcion was responsible for both the readings κριτήν / δικαστήν in the textual tradition.

11. As do Derrett, 'Rich Fool', pp. 101; F.W.L. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age according to St. Luke* (St Louis: Clayton, 1972), p. 247.

12. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 61.

13. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 685.

what is to be the norm for the disciple of Jesus.[14] Continual, active vigilance is required against greed, for it is a false assumption that a full, purposeful life (ἡ ζωή)[15] is to be found in the accumulation of possessions.[16]

The wisdom saying in turn introduces the parable proper. The rich man is a common player in the Lukan parables, and given the previous negative portrayals of the rich in this Gospel (1.52-53; 6.24; 8.14; cf. 16.13, 19-31) the reader is already prejudiced against him.[17] Here the man is a farmer whose land is extremely productive.

By means of the narrative device of soliloquy, common in this Gospel, the man reasons[18] that his storage barns are inadequate in size. As we would expect a rich man to have ample space, his latest crop must have been of bumper proportions.[19] Bailey points out that in Middle Eastern culture the solutions to such problems are usually made

14. The syntax is awkward, producing an overloaded sentence (ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῷ περισσεύειν τινὶ ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτῷ). Numerous explanations have been offered: 1) C.F.D. Moule ('H.W. Moule on Acts iv.25', *ExpTim* 65 [1953–54], pp. 220-21) believes that this is due to the juxtaposition of two separate expressions; 2) Derrett ('Rich Fool', p. 103) believes that Luke is alluding to Aristotle, *Nicomacheau Ethics* 10 8.9-10 ('self sufficiency does not depend on a superabundance of means, nor does conduct...'); 3) C.C. Tarelli ('A Note on Luke xii.15', *JTS* 41 [1940], pp. 260-62) examines the textual history of the verse and proposes that the text originally read ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῷ περισσεύειν τινὶ τα ὑπαρχόντα αὐτοῦ ἐστιν ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ. By an error of dittography τα ὑπαρχόντα was added after ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ, was then changed to a genitive, then the former use dropped out to give our text; 4) Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 62) contends that the awkward syntax is deliberate, designed to produce a rhetorical effect. In deciding between the options, 3) is too speculative and 2) is unlikely given Luke's tendency to smooth out rough grammar. The answer may lie in a combination of 1) and 4). Luke may have deliberately left the words he found in his source so as to produce a rhetorical effect.

15. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 685.

16. Greed was scorned by the Hellenistic moralists (Diodorus Siculus 21.1.4; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 67 [17]—see Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, pp. 60-61; Malherbe, *'Topos'*, pp. 123-35) and features in an exhortation common in the parenetic sections of the New Testament (Rom. 1.29; 2 Cor. 9.5; Eph. 4.19; 5.3; Col. 3.5; 2 Pet. 2.3, 14; cf. *1 Clem.* 35.5; 1 Tim. 6.10). In Col. 3.5 greed is linked to idolatry, which, given Ps. 14.1, fits the designation ἄφρων in Lk. 12.20.

17. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 686.

18. The imperfect διελογίζετο captures the sense of thoughtful reasoning and planning.

19. Scott, *Hear*, p. 134.

in community. This man's self-dialogue indicates, therefore, that he had alienated others and was living in a vacuum.[20] '"I" was his only counsellor'.[21]

At this point the story recalls the adventures of Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 41.35-36), who used stored grain for the benefit of the wider community. This man, however, has other plans. His solution does not reside in distributing his surplus produce, but in embarking on an expansion programme.[22] Here it is instructive to note the repetition of the personal pronoun μου in vv. 17-19. He has no thought of others, or of God's provision and ownership. He is only concerned about himself.

The rich man's mistake is compounded by his carefree arrogance, believing that he controls his own destiny. His ample supply of goods could now be the basis for a life of self-indulgence. He had enough goods to last for many years. He addresses four congratulatory imperatives to his 'soul', with ψυχή acting as a vivid substitute for the reflexive pronoun.[23] His life will now consist of relaxation and celebration, mirroring the epitome of Epicurean values.[24] *Eat, drink and be merry* had obviously become proverbial by this time, though in contrast to the majority of instances it is not to be viewed here in a neutral sense (Judg. 19.4-9; Tob. 7.10) or as a reward for honest work (Eccl. 2.24; 3.13; 5.18; 8.15; Sir. 11.19), but as evidence of the man's conceited nature (cf. Isa. 22.13).

In a unique situation in the parables of Jesus, God intervenes and speaks directly. The one who controls history, and therefore an individual's fate, has other plans. The rich man was a fool, for the very soul that he imagined he controlled and sought to indulge was not his own, and it was required from him that very night. ταύτῃ τῃ νυκτί (cf. 17.34) is in the emphatic position, contrasting the ἔτη πολλά for which the man was planning. He was preparing for his immediate, but not his

20. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 64-65. Also Scott, *Hear*, p. 133.

21. J. Reid, 'The Poor Rich Fool: Luke xii. 21', *ExpTim* 13 (1901–1902), p. 568.

22. Note the oft quoted maxim of Ambrose, that a rich man always has storage available in the mouths of the poor. Cited by R.C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of our Lord* (London: SPCK, 1910), p. 341.

23. The word is used in the sense of the true self. Here it prepares for the dramatic pronouncement in v. 20. For self-address using ψυχή, see also Ps. 42.5, 11; *Pss. Sol.* 3.1.

24. Euripides, *Alcestis* 788; Lucian, *Navig.* 25 (cf. 1 Cor. 13.32). See Scott, *Hear*, pp. 135-37.

ultimate, future. The third person plural ἀπαιτοῦσιν could be used as a reverential periphrasis (cf. 6.38), though given that the speaker is God it may be a periphrasis for the angel of death.[25] This word is commonly used of the repayment of a loan, and here it reinforces the idea that his soul was not his own but was on loan from God (cf. Wis. 15.8).[26]

ἃ δὲ ἡτοίμασας, τίνι ἔσται; is a sarcastic and ironic question. The goods the rich man should have shared will end up in the hands of others anyway. He will not reap the benefits of his self-directed labour. This recalls the words of Ps. 49.10, 13:

> When we look at the wise they die;
> fool and dolt perish together
> and leave their wealth to others...
>
> Such is the fate of the foolhardy,
> the end of those who are pleased with their lot.

and Sir. 11.17-20:

> When he says, 'I have earned my rest,
> now I can live on my savings',
> he does not know how long it will be
> before he must die and leave his wealth to others.

The man is called a fool. He not only forgot that life was temporary, he failed to understand the proper focus of life. In this connection, ἄφρων recalls Ps. 14.1, where the fool denies the very existence of God. The rich man did this in two ways: he wrongly considered that he controlled his own destiny, and he denied the source of his abundance.

Verse 21[27] is commonly seen as a secondary application of the parable,[28] either shifting the focus from the eschatological to the parenetic,[29]

25. So Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 258; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 524. The rabbis equated the angel of death with Satan (*b. B. Bat.* 16a—see Str–B, I, pp. 144-49), though this is unlikely to be the thought here. A more likely proposal is offered by F. Stagg, 'Luke's Theological Use of Parables', *RevExp* 94 (1997), p. 224, who considers that 'they' relates to the possessions of the rich fool. He thought he owned them, but in reality they owned him.

26. Compare Cicero, *Republic* 3.3.4; Epictetus 4.1.172.

27. Omitted by D and some Old Latin versions, and not found in the *Gospel of Thomas.*

28. So Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 219; Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 173; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 258; J. Dupont, *Les Béatitudes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1973), III, pp. 115-16; Eichholz, *Gleichnisse*, p. 181; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 971; Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 107-10; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 684, 687. Nolland believes that this verse is based on the tradi-

or moving from a failure to consider death to a failure to consider post-death judgment.[30] However, it is not a question of parenesis *or* eschatology, but parenesis *based on* eschatology. Admittedly, this is not an eschatology based on the nearness of the end, but an eschatology based on the finiteness of humanity and human accountability to God. Judgment is implicit in the parable and, in fact, is crucial to the story.[31] Without it, the story would only be about the need to be conscious of unexpected death, which need not motivate a person to live life any differently whatsoever.

οὕτως picks up ἄφρων.[32] The designation given to the rich man applies to all who hoard goods but are not rich towards God. In the context of Luke's Gospel, μὴ εἰς θεὸν πλουτῶν refers to almsgiving and using one's wealth on behalf of others (12.33; 14.12-14; 16.19-31). This, in turn, is to lay up treasure in heaven (12.33; cf. Mt. 6.19-21; Sir. 29.8-17; Tob. 4.9; *Pss. Sol.* 9.5).

The parable is left open-ended,[33] causing the audience to ponder their own circumstances. In the end, therefore, Jesus has not arbitrated in the family dispute, but has brought a new perspective to the situation.

3. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Rich Fool makes similar points to that of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31). Primarily, it is an exhortation not to trust in material wealth but to use possessions for the benefit of others. This is highlighted by the context that Luke provides for the parable, following it with hortatory logia concerning the need to trust God for

tion found in Mt. 6.19-21. However, Luke incorporates that tradition in vv. 33-34.

29. Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 397.

30. J. Dupont, 'Die individuelle Eschatologie im Lukasevangelium und in der Apostelgeschichte', in P. Hoffmann *et al.* (eds.), *Orientierung an Jesus: Zur Theologie der Synoptiker* (Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 38-39.

31. So Seng, 'Der reiche Tor', pp. 150-52.

32. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, pp. 520-21) misconstrues οὕτως as picking up the idea of death depriving a person of their possessions. However, as argued above, this is inadequate. The man is a fool because he had accumulated riches and forgotten about his accountability to God.

33. The *ears formula* is included by some minuscules, but is a late reading based on lectionary usage. See J. Birdsall, 'Luke xii,16f and the Gospel of Thomas', *JTS* 13 (1962), pp. 332-36.

daily provisions (12.22-31) and to show active concern for the poor (12.33-34).[34]

The parable also teaches about the sovereignty of God and accountability to him in the face of judgment, an idea that dominates the preceding verses (12.1-12). In this sense, the parable is about eschatological catastrophe, though not in the manner proposed by Jeremias. The catastrophe is not an imminent, universal event,[35] but the catastrophe of facing God at the point of death and having nothing to show for one's life other than an accumulation of goods. Seen in this light, human arrogance is foolish in the extreme (cf. Jas. 1.11; 4.13-16).

34. Scott (*Hear*, pp. 138-40) proposes that as *harvest* is a common metaphor for the kingdom of God, the parable shows that the kingdom is imminent and exists only in a sharing community. It cannot be managed for one's own ends. On this view (against Wenham, *Parables*, p. 142) being *rich toward God* serves not only to obtain entry to the future kingdom. However, the parable is only implicitly a kingdom parable. Scott's proposal also tends to support the original unity of 12.13-21 (which Scott denies), as argued by Derrett (see the introduction to this chapter, above), for the parable illustrates what are appropriate concerns for heirs of the kingdom.

35. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 165.

Chapter 6

THE BARREN FIG TREE (13.6-9)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Barren Fig Tree may originally have been spoken separately to the preceding sayings in 13.1-5, in which case it makes a slightly different, although related, point. However, Luke clearly intends 13.1-9 to be taken as a unit, a fact illustrated by the strong affinity in structure with 15.1-32.[1] In this setting, the parable is an illustration of the warning about the need for repentance (13.1-5). As such, it continues the theme of the need for discernment in the face of eschatological crisis which runs through several pericopes in the preceding chapter (12.1-59). Luke emphasizes the continuity of thought between the two chapters by means of the connecting mechanism ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ καιρῷ (13.1).

The parable is unlikely to be a Lukan adaptation of Mk 11.12-14 (or vice versa)—the cursing of the fig tree[2]—which Luke omits.[3] There is

1. See W.R. Farmer, 'Notes on a Literary and Form-Critical Analysis of Some of the Synoptic Material Peculiar to Luke', *NTS* 8 (1961–62), pp. 305-306, who observes the following structure: 1) an introduction; 2) three closely related sayings; 3) the first two sayings are relatively short, are parallel to one another, are formed as rhetorical questions, and conclude with the λέγω ὑμῖν formula; and 4) the third saying is a longer narrative parable. Farmer concludes that such a structure was created to suit the catechetical and homiletical needs of the early church. Heininger (*Metaphorik*, p. 124) also recognizes a link between 13.6-9 and 15.1-23 in the *seek–find* imagery.

2. Against Drury, *Parables*, p. 119; Goulder, *Luke*, pp. 561-62. For a summary of the debate, see W.R. Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark's Gospel and its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition* (JSNTSup, 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 1-38, 234-36.

3. For an overview of opinions as to why Luke omits Mk 11.12-14, 20-24, see Telford, *Barren Temple*, pp. 229-33. Telford himself believes that this is evidence

little similarity in vocabulary, and the historic present (v. 8) is not characteristic of Luke. Furthermore, the use of fig tree imagery was undoubtedly common in Palestine, as seen in the Old Testament and rabbinic writings.

Indeed, it is the Old Testament that provides the imagery for the parable. The mention of a vineyard immediately recalls Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard (Isa. 5.1-7), while the healthy fig tree is commonly used as a symbol for blessing and prosperity (1 Kgs 4.25; Mic. 4.4) and the destruction of the fig tree as a symbol for judgment (Amos 4.9; Joel 1.7, 12).[4] Probably the closest parallel to our parable is found in Mic. 7.1-7, where the prophet's despair over the wickedness of Judah is likened to one who sought figs to eat but found none. This relationship between the two passages is further underlined by Luke's use of Mic. 7.6 in Lk. 12.53.

The parable may also have been inspired by a fable found in the *Story of Ahiqar*, where a father describes his son in terms of a tree that, although ideally situated, bore no fruit. This prompts the owner to remove the tree, but the tree requests mercy from its owner in terms of a transplant to a new location as a final opportunity to bear fruit.[5] However, the main difference from the Lukan parable is that this request was not granted.

2. *Analysis*

The certain man (τις) of this particular parable has a fig tree planted in his vineyard. ἀμπελών is thus a fruit garden that probably contained a variety of trees.[6] Given Isa. 5.1-7, the audience would probably have

of Luke's concern for the temple and Jerusalem. Luke not only portrays Jesus lamenting over the city at the precise point where Mark depicts the cursing of the fig tree (Lk. 19.41-44), he also includes the parable of the Barren Fig Tree to emphasize God's offer of grace.

4. In a similar vein, the rabbis used good and bad figs as symbols of the righteous and wicked respectively (*b. 'Erub.* 21a-b).

5. There are different versions of the story in Arabic, Syriac and Armenian, all reproduced by Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, II, p. 775. The above is the Arabic version (8.30).

6. That a fig tree was commonly planted in a vineyard is evidenced by the close association of the vine and the fig in the Old Testament (1 Kgs 4.25; Cant. 2.13; Joel 1.7, 12; Mic. 4.4; Zech. 3.10). Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 17.35.200) mentions such a practice, though Theophrastus (*De caus. Plant.* 3.10.6) advises against it.

equated the vineyard with Israel, although in several instances in the Old Testament the fig tree itself is used in some form of illustration regarding Israel or Judah (Jer. 8.13; 24.1-10; Hos. 9.10; Mic. 7.1). This leads Bailey to maintain that the tree represents the leaders of the nation,[7] while others believe that it relates to Jerusalem.[8] Both proposals have some merit. Bailey's contention would appear to be dependent upon the parable coming from a different context, for if originally linked to the sayings in 13.1-5 its focus is more general. Given the availability of hindsight, it is possible that the fig tree represented Jerusalem for Luke and his readers, especially given the lament in vv. 31-35. However, it is perhaps best to take it in the general sense of any member of the Israelite community.[9]

ἦλθεν ζητῶν (v. 6) refers to a particular occasion when the owner came looking for fruit from the tree but found none. Addressed to the keeper of the vineyard, ἰδοὺ and the two present tense verbs[10] add emphasis. This was not an isolated occurrence. The owner had been coming for three years looking for fruit but had found none. Normally a fig tree does not mature for three to four years after planting. In addition, the fruit of the first three years was forbidden and that of the fourth was to be devoted to God (Lev. 19.23-24). Thus this dialogue took place anywhere between six[11] or nine[12] years after planting, depending on whether the owner bothered coming in the first three years of fruiting. In any case, the tree has had ample time to be productive. Consequently, he instructs the gardener to cut the tree down,[13] for it is only wasting valuable soil.

7. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 81-82.

8. So Lenski, *St. Luke*, pp. 726-29; Telford, *Barren Temple*, p. 227.

9. So Harmansa, *Die Zeit der Entscheidung* (this book was unavailable to me).

10. Although BDF, §322, insists that ἔρχομαι and εὑρίσκω are not perfective presents, in this context these verbs certainly fulfil the grammatical function of the perfect. This then leads to the obvious question as to why the perfect tense is not used. Perhaps, in this context, the present tense is even more vivid than the perfect, for it portrays the unfolding or developing of the fruitlessness of the tree.

11. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 170.

12. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 82.

13. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 83) notes that ἔκκοψον (lit. = *dig out*) accords well with Middle Eastern agricultural practice, where a tree is dug out by the roots (cf. Lk. 3.9). He believes that this signifies the total elimination of the faithless leadership. Marshall (*Luke*, p. 555) asks whether there is a hint of another tree to be planted in its place.

Here again, use is made of the Old Testament tradition whereby apostasy is pictured in terms of fruitlessness (Jer. 8.13; Hos. 9.16). The destruction of the fig tree also typifies the judgment of God upon the wicked (Joel 1.6-7; Amos 4.9).

The vinedresser was, however, prepared to leave the tree for another year, during which time he would take special care of it by cultivating the soil and applying fertilizer.[14] As a fig tree is ordinarily quite hardy, the emphasis here may be on the drastic measures taken to ensure its survival.[15]

μὲν...δέ is used with a conditional construction to facilitate the contrast between the two possible outcomes (v. 9). First, there is a chance that such measures may succeed. Here the protasis is introduced by κἂν, and although εἰς τὸ μέλλον normally refers to an unspecified future (cf. 1 Tim. 6.19), here it represents the one-year period. The omission of the apodosis creates an aposiopesis, a construction that is attested in both Semitic and Classical Greek sources.[16] Not only does the ellipsis build an inner tension, allowing the reader to ponder the possibility of change,[17] it also alludes to the unlimited possibilities that fruitfulness will bring.

γε adds emphasis in the second alternative. If no fruit appears after one year, then the gardener will agree to have the tree removed.[18] There is a period of grace, but that period is limited.

3. *Interpretation*

If the parable was originally separate to the preceding sayings, it may well have been addressed to the leaders of the nation who had failed in the duty entrusted to them. If this is the case, the story is analogous to the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mk 12.1-12 par. Lk. 20.9-19). Of course, even in this setting the parable is not divorced from the theme

14. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 84) regards the reference to manure (κόπριον) as an example of 'insult humour' against the Jewish leadership, thereby giving the parable a sharp cutting edge.

15. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 170.

16. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 556.

17. Scott, *Hear*, p. 338.

18. The future tense ἐκκόψεις is a polite imperative, which grants permission to the owner (Marshall, *Luke*, p. 556).

of repentance, for fruitlessness is a sin that needs to be addressed and rectified.

Nevertheless, there are no compelling grounds to separate the parable from 13.1-5. Indeed, if this is a unified piece of teaching from the historical Jesus, then, given the general focus of the call to repentance in 13.1-5, the parable is unlikely to refer to a select group as discussed above. Rather, the onus lies on the individual to recognize the significance of the present period of grace and to repent of his or her sin.

Given the advantage of hindsight, the parable applies not only to individuals but to Israel as a whole. The nation had been given ample opportunity throughout its chequered history to produce the fruit that God desired. More recently, grace had been shown in the call by John the Baptist to repentance (Lk. 3.7-14), and now it is expressed in the kingdom ministry of Jesus himself. While it is not necessary to read the parable as a direct allegory, whereby the three years correspond to Jesus' earthly ministry,[19] it is valid to understand the last period of grace as an allusion to Jesus' messianic mission in general.[20] As L.T. Johnson states, 'The repentance called for by the prophet Jesus, of course, is not simply a turning from sin but an acceptance of the visitation of God in the proclamation of God's kingdom'.[21]

The parable is also a clear portrayal of the character of God. God's justice demands punishment for sin, but his mercy withholds judgment allowing repentance to occur. Consequently, we should not understand the dialogue between the owner and the gardener as a debate between God and Jesus, whereby Jesus intercedes on Israel's behalf.[22] Rather, it

19. As proposed by Godet (*St. Luke*, II, p. 119), who also takes the one year of grace as equivalent to the forty years respite that lasts from the crucifixion until the destruction of Jerusalem. On the other hand, Lenski (*St. Luke*, pp. 726-29) understands the three years in terms of the ministry of John the Baptist and the work of Jesus up to this point, while the one year is the period from this point until the cross. Schmid (*Lukas*, pp. 229-30) sees the three years relating to John and the one year to the ministry of Jesus.

20. So Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 420; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 719. Heininger (*Metaphorik*, pp. 129-31) believes that the parable was told in the early stages of Jesus' ministry, when he still held out some hope for Israel.

21. L.T. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 213.

22. Against Lenski, *St. Luke*, pp. 729-30. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 170) believes that the gardener may 'conceal the figure of Jesus himself'.

simply reflects a personification of the tension between mercy and judgment.[23]

Bailey claims that the presence of mercy is the essential difference between this parable and the Song of the Vineyard in Isa. 5.1-7.[24] However, although there is no mention of a future period of grace, Isa. 5.4a indicates that ample grace had been bestowed in the past. There is simply nothing more that the owner can do. This is consistent with the portrayal of the character of God elsewhere in the Old Testament (2 Chron. 26.15; Ps. 78.38; 86.15; Hos. 7.1-7), for truly he is not a God that delights in the destruction of the wicked (Ezek. 33.11). Thus the Old Testament provides not only the imagery, but also the theology for the parable.

For Luke's readers, the parable serves a secondary purpose of explaining the current status of Israel, thereby preparing for the laments over Jerusalem (13.31-35; 19.41-44) and the rejection of Paul's apostolic message by the Jews in Acts (Acts 13.46; 18.5-6).[25] However, Luke's primary purpose is to warn against the sin of unproductivity. Naturally, this is not divorced from the issue of repentance, given that for Luke repentance involves turning to a new way of life (3.10-14; 19.1-10; 19.11-27).[26]

Finally, the parable cannot be used to support the idea of a delay in the parousia, for the threat of imminent crisis and judgment is still very much present.

23. So Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 85. Manson (*Sayings*, p. 275) notes the similarity to rabbinic writings where a debate occurs between the attributes of God.

24. So Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 83.

25. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, p. 131.

26. F.W. Young, 'Luke 13:1-9', *Int* 31 (1977), pp. 62-63; J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 515.

Chapter 7

THE GREAT FEAST (14.15-24)

1. *Introduction*

The setting for the parable of the Great Feast is indicated in 14.1, where Jesus is dining in the house of one of the Pharisees. This occasion provides the opportunity for healing and teaching about the sabbath (14.1-6), a lesson to the guests regarding places of honour (14.7-11), a lesson to the host about the proper choice of guests (14.12-14), and the parable of the Great Feast (14.15-24). Although linked to 14.12-14 by the reference to the poor, crippled, lame, and blind, our parable is more than a lesson in morality and diverges into broader territory.[1] It also parallels 13.22-34 to the extent that it challenges popular misconceptions about participation in the eschatological banquet. There, the children of Jerusalem refuse the invitation, while guests converge from the four corners of the world to participate. The parable also has links to 15.1-2 about table fellowship with outcasts, while, together with 14.25-35, it echoes 16.1-13 regarding priorities for discipleship.

The parable of the Great Feast has some affinities with Matthew's parable of the Wedding Banquet (Mt. 22.1-10), though the precise relationship between the two parables is difficult to determine. In Matthew, the master is a king who gives a wedding banquet for his son. There is more detail given concerning the meal, more servants are sent to summon the invited, less detail is given in the excuses offered, and there is only one sending to gather in outsiders. Matthew's focus is on rejection.[2] Judgment upon those who refuse to attend is emphasized, a fact

1. J.A. Sanders ('The Ethic of Election in Luke's Great Banquet Parable', in J. Crenshaw and J. Willis [eds.], *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* [New York: Ktav, 1974], pp. 245-71) proposes that 14.7-24 (in fact the entire Central Section) may be read as a correction to the doctrine of election held by Jesus' contemporaries. Sanders' views will be discussed further below, and again in Chapter 15.

2. This element is not entirely lacking in Luke, especially if the literary context

highlighted by the surrounding context of the parables of rejection[3] and the following pronouncement against the unsuitably attired guests (Mt. 22.11-14).[4] In the end, the fact that there is little similarity in wording between the two parables would tend to militate against the possibility that both Matthew and Luke redacted a Q parable.[5] We are therefore left with two options. Either Jesus uttered a similar parable on different occasions,[6] or a core story underwent adaptation in various strands of the tradition.[7]

is considered. As noted by T. Noel ('The Parable of the Wedding Guest: A Narrative Critical Interpretation', *PRS* 16 [1989], pp. 17-27), the parable can be seen as the climax of a short section on the rejection of the religious leaders. The Pharisees will be excluded from the eschatological banquet (14.24) because they are more concerned about the minutiae of the law than care for people in difficulty (14.1-6), they love the applause of others (14.7-11), and they neglect to care for the poor (14.12-14).

3. It seems that the parable of the Wedding Banquet has assimilated facets of the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Mt. 21.33-46), most likely in its pre-Matthean stage. See W.C. Allen, *St. Matthew* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912), p. 235; W. Trilling, 'Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte des Gleichnisses vom Hochzeitsmahl Mt 22,1-14', *BZ* 4 (1960), pp. 251-65; W.T. Albright and C.S. Mann, *Matthew* (AB, 26; New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 269; R.H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 432-37.

4. Against Scott (*Hear*, pp. 162-63), the saying is not so awkward as first seems. For Matthew, it corrects the apparent universalistic thrust of v. 9. Outsiders are called into the feast, but this calling is not unconditional. See E.E. Lemcio, 'The Parables of the Great Supper and the Wedding Feast: History, Redaction and Canon', *HBT* 8 (1986), pp. 21-22.

5. Against S. Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), pp. 391-98; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1052; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 184-85. L. Schottroff ('Das Gleichnis vom grossen Gastmahl in der Logienquelle', *EvT* 47 [1987], pp. 192-96) produces a list of verbal parallels which, despite her arguments to the contrary, are quite unimpressive.

6. So Plummer, *Saint Luke*, pp. 359-60; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 194; H. Palmer, 'Just Married Cannot Come', *NovT* 18 (1976), p. 255; Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 198; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 237. Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 1050) unjustly criticizes this option as 'pat and easy'. Although it is the simplest solution, it is far from improbable given Jesus' itinerant ministry. Breech (*Silence of Jesus*, pp. 114-24) stresses this point, but then proceeds to use both Matthew and Luke to reconstruct the original wording!

7. So Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 296; Stein, *Parables,* pp. 83-84; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 584; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 442; Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 49. H. Zimmermann (*Jesus*

A version of the parable more closely resembling the Lukan account is found in the *Gospel of Thomas* (64). *Thomas* lacks any allegorical features, has four excuses, and the invitees are merchants. Following on from the Rich Fool, the parable functions as a warning to the rich against materialistic concerns. Though many believe that the *Thomas* parable reflects an independent tradition that may be closer to the original,[8] it seems more likely that it is dependent upon Luke and has undergone Gnostic redaction.[9]

A final introductory matter concerns the literary influences upon our parable. In the Jewish tale of Bar Ma'yan,[10] a tax-collector arranged a feast for the leaders of the city. When they did not attend he ordered that the poor be brought in so that the food might not be wasted.[11] Although Jeremias believes that the parable of the Great Feast is based on this story,[12] the intentions of the two tales are vastly different. The Jewish story is concerned with good deeds and seeks to explain why such an immoral person could have received such a lavish burial.

Braun, on the other hand, believes that Luke has reworked a Hellenistic banquet story. The nature of the excuses offered by the original invitees locates them in the urban elite, whereas the secondary guests belong to the lowest ranking of society—the urban poor. The chief player is the house holder, who breaks lines of friendship with his former wealthy friends and reconstructs his social identity among the poor. Seen in these terms, the parable has nothing to do with mission or

Christus: Geschichte und Verkündigung [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1973], pp. 110-21) points out that even after such a thoroughgoing adaptation and redaction the final parable can still rightly be designated a parable of Jesus, for it is his original proclamation that is used to address each new situation.

8. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 176; F. Hahn, 'Das Gleichnis von der Einladung zum Festmahl', in O. Böcher and K. Haacker (eds.), *Verborum Veritas* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), p. 60; N. Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), p. 113; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1051; Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 72.

9. So Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 185. For a fuller discussion of the parable in the *Gospel of Thomas*, see J.D. McCaughey, 'Two Synoptic Parables in the Gospel of Thomas', *AusBR* 8 (1960), pp. 24-28; Hahn, 'Festmahl', pp. 60-65; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1050-52; Scott, *Hear*, pp. 165-68.

10. Reproduced in *y. Sanh.* 6.23c; *y. Ḥag.* 2.77d.

11. For a fuller account of the story, see Perrin, *Rediscovering*, pp. 111-12.

12. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 178-79.

eschatology, but with the conversion or reorientation of the wealthy elite.[13]

2. *Analysis*

The occasion for the parable is given by an interjection by one of the dinner guests,[14] who understood the idea of divine recompense (14.14) to include participation in the eschatological banquet.[15] His declaration betrays his conviction that he will participate in this future event. μακάριος provides the link to the preceding section.

Jesus then tells a parable about a man who gave a great feast to which many people were invited. Because the idea of a δεῖπνον μέγα was a standing figure for the messianic banquet (and hence salvation), the parable, in effect, declares the man to be correct. However, contrary to the man's convictions, Jesus implies that the time for the banquet has arrived,[16] and challenges him with the need to accept the invitation.

The arrival of the banquet is indicated by the use of ἤδη (v. 17). The man sends his servant to summon the guests to the feast,[17] for all the food is prepared. At the level of *Bildhalfte*, this practice accords with the courtesy attested for the upper classes in both Jewish and Roman culture.[18] Refusal at this point would be an act of great discourtesy.[19] At

13. Braun, *Feasting*.

14. Luke often has an interjection as the occasion for further teaching (9.57; 11.45; 12.13; 13.1). This could either be part of the tradition (so Hahn, 'Festmahl', p. 74; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 587) or a redactional advice (so E. Haenchen, 'Das Gleichnis vom grossen Mahl', in *Die Bibel und wir: Gesammelte Aufsätze, zweiter Band* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968), pp. 143-44; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1052, 1054; B.H. Young, *Jesus and his Jewish Parables*, p. 169. Bultmann (*History*, p. 109) believes it to be a saying of Jesus, a view endorsed by Str–B, I, pp. 180-81, which considers that the reference to the *kingdom of God* is more suited to Jesus than an ordinary Jew. The latter would have employed another term.

15. φάγεται ἄρτον is a Hebraism meaning to eat a meal (2 Sam. 9.7, 10; 2 Kgs 4.8 etc.).

16. Against Scott (*Hear*, p. 164), it is unnecessary to see the issue of the delay of the parousia introduced here.

17. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 95) makes too much of the present imperative ἔρχεσθε in arguing that it has the force of *continue to come* (i.e. follow up on your acceptance of the original invitation). As a verb of motion, ἔρχομαι simply prefers the present imperative (see B.M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990], pp. 341-45).

18. See Philo, *Op. Mund.* 78, 'Just as the givers of a banquet, then, do not send out summonses to supper till they have put everything in readiness for the feast...'

the level of *Sachhalfte*, however, the use of ἤδη indicates that table fellowship with the earthly Jesus prefigures the eschatological banquet. Thus, in a sense, the eschatological banquet is now ready. Now is the day of salvation (cf. 2 Cor. 6.2)![20] This is highlighted if we consider the singular τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ as a veiled reference to Jesus himself.[21]

Jesus' teaching about the need to accept the invitation is introduced as the story unfolds, for quite contrary to the expectations of the hearers all[22] the invited guests decline to attend at the last minute. Three examples are given. The first excuse involves the inspection of a recently acquired field, with ἀνάγκη implying a legal obligation. The second man seeks to be excused in order to test five pairs of oxen that he has recently purchased.[23] The third excuse concerns recent marriage.[24] The

See also Est. 5.8; 6.14; Terence, *Hauton.* 1.1.117; Apuleius, *Metam.* 3.12. This is not the same idea as that reflected in *Lam. R.* 4.2, where it is stated that no one would attend a banquet unless invited twice, since the issue here is to avoid mistaken identity.

19. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 176; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 94-95. Plummer (*Saint Luke*, p. 360) comments that among Arab tribes such a refusal would be tantamount to a declaration of war.

20. Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 92; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 180; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 95; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 775. This does not indicate a totally realized eschatology, how ever, for the consummation is still to occur at the heavenly banquet (Lk. 13.28-29).

21. A. Weiser (*Die Knechtsgleichnisse der synoptischen Evangelien* [SANT, 29; Munich: Kösel, 1971], pp. 58-71) discusses the use of δοῦλος in this parable and the (possible) Matthean parallel. He concludes that Jesus conceivably used the term secretly of himself, though Luke attached no allegorical meaning to it. It is arguable, however, that Luke's readers would have identified the servant with Jesus, given that the story unfolds in line with the programmatic announcement in the Nazareth synagogue (4.18-21). It is also instructive that for the Qumran community it was the Messiah himself who would call the righteous to the eschatological banquet (1QSa 2.11-23).

22. The otherwise unattested ἀπὸ μιᾶς could be either: 1) an Aramaism related to the idiom מן חדה found in later Palestinian Christian Aramaic, meaning *all at once* (so Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 176; Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 191; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1055); or 2) a Greek ellipsis (supply φωνῆς) meaning *unanimously* (so Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 361; BDF, 241(6), p. 126; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 588; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 775).

23. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 177) states that one or two pair of oxen were adequate for a small farm. This suggests a man of some means, who owned at least forty-five hectares.

24. Note Luke's inclusion of γυναῖκα, which he also adds to the sayings in

latter diverges in form[25] and violates the normal triadic pattern whereby the third person reacts differently to the previous two (Lk. 10.29-37; 19.11-27).[26] This serves to further shock the audience. This man had recently married[27] and possibly felt an obligation to be with his new wife, who would not have been invited to the feast.

Many have commented on the affinities between the excuses offered in the parable and the exemptions for Holy War listed in Deut. 20.5-7 and 24.5 (buying a field, planting a vineyard, recent marriage). Such exemptions were invoked by Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc. 3.56), although by the time the Mishnah was codified a distinction was made between a war fought out of 'free choice' and a religious war. The exemptions do not apply in the latter case (*m. Soṭa* 8.1-7).

In a rather complex argument, Derrett proposes that the parable of the Great Supper is a midrash on Zeph. 1.7-8 and selected portions of Deuteronomy regarding the Holy War. The supper is, in fact, a picture of the victory celebration after the conquest. All are called to fight in God's war, which is a war against sin. Thus, by their very nature, all prior attachments disqualify one from attending. However, the excuses are not valid, for this is no ordinary Holy War but the final Holy War. Lk. 14.25-35 then goes on to illustrate the type of commitment necessary for those who wish to fight at Jesus' side in this war.[28]

Derrett's proposal is echoed by Ballard, who notes that in the Deuteronomic context of choosing life or death (28.1-68; 30.15-20) apostasy will result in the marginalized and the Gentiles overtaking the land (28.47-57). He argues that given the allusions to Deuteronomy in the parable of the Great Feast, which in turn is closely followed by the story of a king going to war (14.31-32), the parable should be seen as a

14.46 and 18.29 (cf. Mt. 10.37; 19.29; Mk 10.29). Possibly this is an adaptation by the Evangelist, who desires to stress commitment to the kingdom above commitment to one's spouse. See further A. Stöger, 'Armut und Ehelösigkeit: Besitz und Ehe der Jünger nach dem Lukasevangelium', *GuL* 40 (1967), pp. 43-59.

25. It omits the formula ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρητημένον, which could be a Latinism *excusatem habeas me rogo* (Martial, *Epigr.* 2.79). παραιτέομαι can have this stronger sense of *refuse/decline*, especially in the context of an invitation (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.8.2; 12.4.7). See MM, p. 484.

26. Scott, *Hear*, p. 170.

27. In the *Gospel of Thomas* the man is making arrangements for a friend's wedding.

28. See J.D.M. Derrett, 'The Parable of the Great Supper', in *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), pp. 126-55.

midrash on Deut. 20.5-7. The point is to show that the absolute demands of the kingdom reinterpret the Mosaic law.[29]

In response to these suggestions, it should first of all be noted that the excuses only roughly parallel the Deuteronomic legislation. What is more, there is no mention of a war in the Lukan parable, and the above proposals must conflate the Lukan and Matthean stories. Palmer has correctly argued that for this conflation to be valid, a relationship between the two parables must be proposed which adequately explains their differences. However, this is not an easy task. Why would Luke keep the allusions but drop the reference to fighting? Why would Matthew do the opposite? Palmer may well be correct in claiming that the allusion to Deuteronomy may be humorous, in that an excuse for not attending war is given as a reason not to attend a dinner party![30] Another possibility is that the Lukan parable alludes to Deuteronomy simply to stress the urgency of the present situation. Even exemptions sanctioned by law for fighting in a war do not apply, for something far more pressing requires attention.[31] Of course the allusion to Deuteronomy may be entirely inadvertent, and is certainly not necessary to understand the point of the parable.[32] The three excuses concern commercial and family life, and accord with Jesus' teaching else where about the danger of allowing possessions or domestic ties to distract from discipleship. This is taken up in 14.25-33 and stated forcefully in 16.13.

A related question concerns the apparent validity of the excuses offered. Although some seek to give them credibility,[33] on close inspection they appear quite feeble and are apparently designed to insult the host. Given that the banquet would probably have been held

29. P.H. Ballard, 'Reasons for Refusing the Great Supper', *JTS* 23 (1972), pp. 341-50.

30. Palmer, 'Just Married', pp. 241-57.

31. So Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 142; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 574. This option preserves the intended allusion, but does not require a reference to war in the Lukan context.

32. Against J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 256-66.

33. For instance, see Derrett, *Law*, pp. 137-38; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 589. Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 187-89) construes the key element as hyperbole (i.e. all decline), not in the flimsy nature of the excuses. D. Dormeyer ('Literarische und theologische Analyse der Parabel Lukas 14,15-24', *BibLeb* 15 [1974], pp. 211-12) believes that the excuses serve as *indirect* expressions of lack of interest.

in the late afternoon,[34] we are faced with the quite unlikely scenario that a person would inspect a field or test oxen as nightfall approached.[35] Bailey adds that no one in the Middle East buys land without first being thoroughly familiar with it, and buyers of farm animals always view them working then test them person ally prior to purchase.[36] The third excuse is also improper, for the man would certainly have been aware of his situation when he accepted the original invitation. His rudeness is further highlighted by the break in the excuse formula.[37] Bailey adds that even to mention females in the family was considered culturally inappropriate, thus further offending the host.[38]

It would appear, therefore, that the excuses are deliberately portrayed as feeble, designed to shock the audience by their intentional insult to the host. In this way, Jesus wants his audience to realize that people are using equally feeble excuses, and in some cases the very same excuses, to reject God's invitation to the kingdom.[39]

When the servant returned with the news, his master was understandably angry. However, whereas Matthew develops the punitive action of the host (which is more expected given the insult to his honour),[40] Luke stresses his positive action. The servant is sent out once

34. See Str–B, II, p. 206.

35. Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, p. 132.

36. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 95-98. Linnemann (*Parables*, p. 89) suggests that the aorist ἠγόρασα has a present force—the man is in the process of buying. However, there are no contextual features to warrant viewing the aorist as dramatic.

37. Linnemann (*Parables*, pp. 89-90; see also *idem*, 'Überlegungen zur Parabel vom grossen Abendmahl: Lc 14,15-24/Mt 22,1-14', *ZNW* 51 [1960], pp. 246-55) rejects the third excuse (v. 20) as secondary because of the difference in form. Consequently she believes that the first two requests are only for late arrival, not non-attendance. Thus the house must be full (v. 24) so that the late arrivals cannot gain admittance. However, not only is there no textual warrant for viewing v. 20 as secondary, to delete the verse interrupts the normal triadic pattern. We might also ask why others are called in if the guests are merely late. Furthermore, refusals to attend occur in all three versions of the parable.

38. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 98-99.

39. W.G. Carey ('Excuses, Excuses: The Parable of the Banquet [Luke 14:15-24] within the Larger Context of Luke', *IBS* 17 [1995], pp. 177-87) notes that the excuses are part of a Lukan scheme of tripartite excuses (cf. 9.57-62; 22.34) that serve as a repeated challenge to proper discipleship and attack the 'precarious status of privilege' (p. 186).

40. Both Derrett (*Law*, p. 140) and Scott (*Hear*, p. 171) consider that it would

more, this time into the streets and lanes of the town to bring the poor, crippled, lame, and blind[41] from their normal abode into the feast. ταχέως conveys a sense of urgency. At the story level, the matter was urgent because food would have been pre pared for the expected number of guests.[42] The *Sachhalfte*, on the other hand, points to the urgency associated with the arrival of the kingdom.

The servant carried out these orders, then returned announcing that room still existed at the feast. So the master sent him out once again, this time to seek out the poor folk sheltering in the roadside hedges outside the town.

ἀνάγκαζω should be understood as persuasion, not force. Understand ably the poor would be reluctant to attend. In addition, it was a cultural phenomenon to refuse an invitation that was unexpected (cf. Gen. 19.2-3; Lk. 24.28-29).[43] The ἵνα clause expresses the need for this urgency. The house must be full.

The force of this language, however, ultimately needs to be explained not by a cautious modesty, but by the presence of the kingdom. It expresses the saving will of God, calling people to proleptic participation in the eschatological banquet. The matter is urgent, for to accept the message of Jesus[44] and to enjoy table fellowship with him is to participate in this feast.[45] Of course force is not the issue,[46] for physical

be more normal to expect a social insult in return, not a physical campaign. However, in the Matthean version some of the slaves were mistreated and killed.

41. The same list occurs in 14.13, thus reinforcing the lesson given to the host in the preceding pericope. Matthew has *as many as you find.* In the unlikely event that this is a Q parable, it is difficult to say what is original. Matthew may have generalized, while Luke may have added these categories here in line with 14.13 (so Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 362; Scott, *Hear*, p. 165). Nolland (*Luke*, p. 754), on the other hand, suggests that 14.13 was composed in light of 14.21.

42. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 94.

43. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 177; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 300; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 108; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 590. Contrast Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 362, who feels they would be unlikely to refuse.

44. In this sense, the shift from οἰκοδεσπότης (v. 21) to κύριος (v. 23) may be deliberate.

45. Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 445. S. Kreuzer ('Der Zwang des Boten: Beobachtungen zu Lk 14,23 und 1 Kor 9,16', *ZNW* 76 [1985], pp. 123-28) argues that in Aramaic a reflexive would have been understood with the imperative ἀνάγκασον. Thus Lk. 14.23 should be understood in the same sense as 1 Cor. 9.16, where the compulsion is placed upon the messenger, not upon the recipients. However, this understanding undercuts the urgent tone of the parable in connection with the need to respond to

constraint does not fit either the proclamation or the actions of Jesus as a whole.

If the Lukan and Matthean parables derive from a common original, the question arises as to whether Matthew's one sending, or Luke's double sending, reflects the original. Normally the former is accepted, with the Lukan version seen as reflecting salvation historical concerns in the instigation of the Gentile mission. In this connection, it is noted that the servant is sent beyond the town and that his mission is not completed.[47]

Nevertheless, there are arguments to support the originality of the Lukan version. Matthew's ὅσους ἐὰν εὕρητε is very general and may be designed to prepare for the saying in vv. 11-14. Furthermore, Matthew has a double summons, which may be an adaptation of Luke's double sending in order to focus on the theme of rejection.[48] In any event, Lk. 14.23 need not refer specifically to a Gentile mission. Nolland correctly states, 'In the setting of the original ministry of Jesus these verses need, however, no more than to anticipate the open-ended and outward-looking future that Jesus' roving ministry continued to contemplate'.[49]

While only the Gospel of Luke contains quotes of the universalist texts of Isa. 40.5 and 42.6 (Lk. 2.32; 3.6), there is evidence elsewhere that Jesus himself contemplated a Gentile mission (Lk. 13.28-29 and par.; 24.47; Jn 10.16).[50] Of course this is not a novel idea, for it is

God's gracious kingdom offer.

46. Stemming from Augustine's exegesis (by which he justified his actions against the Donatists), this verse has been used in a variety of settings, including the Inquisition, to enforce Christian orthodoxy. See F.A. Norwood, '"Compel Them to Come In": The History of Luke 14:23', *RelLif* 23 (1954), pp. 516-27.

47. So Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 64-65; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 297; Hahn, 'Festmahl', pp. 70-74; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1052; A. Vögtle, 'Die Einladung zum grossen Gastmahl und zum königlichen Hochzeitsmahl: Ein Paradigma für den Wandel des geschichtlichen Verständnishorizonts', in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Beiträge zur Evangelienforschung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1971), pp. 183-84; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 442; Schneider, *Lukas*, pp. 317-19; W. Radl, 'Zur Struktur der eschatologischen Gleichnissen Jesu', *TTZ* 92 (1983), pp. 124-25; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 186, 192; Wiefel, *Lukas*, p. 276.

48. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 754; Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 159.

49. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 757. See also Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 101-109; Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 234-35.

50. It is here that the criterion of *dissimilarity* can be misleading. Using this

grounded firmly in the Old Testament (Ps. 22.27; 86.9; Isa. 55.5; 60.3; Dan. 7.14), especially in the key text regarding the messianic banquet (Isa. 25.6-8).

On the other hand, the additional sending may have had nothing to do with a geographical extension of mission. Jesus may simply be emphasizing God's concern for the poor and destitute. In fact, this is the explicit point of vv. 21-23. God's kingdom is not merely for a select few; rather the invitation extends even to the marginalized of society.[51]

The parable concludes with the Lukan version of rejection.[52] Those who were originally invited[53] would not be sent portions of food as a

criterion, most would agree with Vögtle ('Gastmahl', p. 215) that, 'Die Herbeiholung der Ersatzgäste wird jetzt auf ein missionarisches Handeln gedeutet, nämlich von der urchristlichen Heidenmission verstanden, *an die Jesus selbst sicher nicht dachte*' (emphasis mine). This is so because we are faced with two apparently contradictory facets of Jesus' ministry. On the one hand he explicitly states that his mission encompasses only the Jewish people (Mt. 10.5-6; 15.24 par. Mk 7.24-30), on the other hand a more universalist picture is presented. Following critical methodology one of the two must be considered inauthentic, and as the latter reflects the situation of the early church, it is the universalist perspective that is considered secondary. However, it is feasible that although Jesus undertook only a Jewish mission, he did contemplate the extension of this mission beyond the borders of Israel. Indeed, this is not only prefigured in a couple of instances in his ministry (Mk 7.24-30; Lk. 7.1-10), it could be argued that this is part of the reason he trained the twelve. These issues are taken up by S.G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke–Acts* (SNTSMS, 23; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), who argues that Jesus did not envisage a Gentile mission as such, but understood that the Gentiles would be included in the kingdom in the Old Testament sense of an apocalyptic proclamation at the end of time. Furthermore, Wilson places great stress upon Mt. 10.23b in insisting that Jesus only intended the twelve to undertake a Jewish mission. However, Mt. 10.23b is open to a number of interpretations and need not refer to the parousia (see D.A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* [WBC, 33a; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993], pp. 278-80).

51. H.E. Dollar (*A Biblical-Missiological Exploration of the Cross-Cultural Dimensions in Luke–Acts* [San Francisco: Mellen Research University, 1993], pp. 35-82) proposes that here Luke is preparing his readers for the Gentile mission by an emphasis upon caring for the marginalized of society.

52. D.O. Via ('The Relation of Form to Content in the Parables: The Wedding Feast', *Int* 25 [1971], pp. 177-78) observes that although the excuse makers are structurally dominant (they appear at the beginning and the end), as far as content is concerned the emphasis falls on the gracious inclusion of the outcasts.

53. This is the sense of τῶν κεκλημένων in the *Bildhalfte*. J.A. Sanders ('Ethic', p. 259) is correct in his assertion that in the *Sachhalfte* it refers to those who con-

token of recognition and participation (cf. Neh. 8.10-12).[54] The statement is introduced by λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, a formula that in this Gospel normally introduces a pronouncement of Jesus (11.8; 15.7, 10; 16.9; 18.14).[55] If this is the case here,[56] it is a direct, rather than implied, reference to those who have rejected the summons to enter the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God. However, as Jeremias notes, even if it is meant to be an address of the host, it carries no real threat to the audience of Jesus unless it refers to the eschatological banquet.[57] Participation is only by acceptance and entry. Those who refuse cannot have portions of it on their own terms.

3. *Interpretation*

To some extent, the interpretation of the parable of the Great Feast depends on how much allegory one finds.[58] How, for example, are we to understand the πολλοὺς who were originally invited? Should special significance be attached to the double sending of the servant?

Haenchen's objection, that the πολλοὺς could not refer to the pious or rich of Israel because they then have to reject the offer before it goes to the ungodly or the poor,[59] is unnecessary. This confuses *Bildhalfte* and *Sachhalfte*. Chronology belongs to the story by necessity. In reality, the κεκλημένοι are not those invited first, but those who consider themselves invited. They are the 'apparently elect'.[60]

sidered themselves invited.

54. Derrett, *Law*, p. 141; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 591. It has nothing to do with the non-acceptance of latecomers (as proposed by Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 361; Linnemann, *Parables*, pp. 88-97).

55. Jeremias (*Parables*, pp. 171-80) and Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 109) consider v. 24 to be a pronouncement of Jesus, whereas Derrett (*Law*, p. 141) and Marshall (*Luke*, pp. 590-91) see it as a statement made by the host.

56. Supported by the shift to the plural ὑμῖν, though Marshall (*Luke*, p. 591) considers that the assembled guests are being addressed.

57. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 178. Also Schottroff, 'Gastmahl', p. 202.

58. The parable certainly teaches more than 'It may be too late' (Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 176), or the 'Perplexing dimension of the personal'—not conveying ideas about God or human response to God (Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, pp. 134-35).

59. Haenchen, 'Mahl', pp. 153-55.

60. J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', p. 259; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 754. In addition, it is important to stress that, from the beginning, Jesus' mission was directed to the marginalized of society (Lk. 4.18-19). On the latter point, see Schulz, *Die Spruchquelle*, pp. 400-403.

As such, the parable subverts the Pharisaical doctrine of election.[61] It is a challenge to the lifestyle and very identity of the κεκλημένοι.[62] In this way, the parable reinforces the teaching of 13.22-30 not to presume upon salvation, and is a vivid illustration of the rising and falling of many in Israel (2.34). God has indeed invited the religious authorities to the banquet, but by rejecting Jesus they did not understand the significance of the present time, and thereby rejected God's invitation. They are simply too preoccupied with their own religiosity to recognize the dawning and nature of the kingdom.[63] Consequently, Jesus implicitly attacks their own feeble excuses for rejecting him, such as his habit of enjoying table fellowship with tax-collectors and sinners (5.30; 15.2), and his violation of the sabbath (13.10-17; 14.1-6).[64] They did not understand that the kingdom was for all.

Later Christian readers of Luke's Gospel possibly found ammunition in this for their struggle with the Jews. However, Sanders rightly points out that this undermines the original intention of the parable. While it is impossible to ascertain Luke's precise intention in this regard, it is clear that Jesus wished the parable to be a prophetic challenge to self-examination, and thus, even for a Christian audience, it should also function to correct an inadequate doctrine of election.[65]

The parable also witnesses to the grace of God in inviting people into his kingdom. Yet God is no ogre. He does not compel attendance, but will allow people to exercise their free choice and refuse his offer. Thus we are faced with the same theological emphasis as in the parables of the Lost (15.1-32). Prior divine initiative needs a complementary human response.

It is here that the Lukan parable diverges from the Matthean. Whereas the latter focuses on the punitive action of the host, Luke emphasizes his graciousness, a graciousness that is particularly evident in his

61. See further, Chapter 15, Section 2c below.

62. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 185; J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', p. 260. Sanders pro poses that not only this parable, but chs. 14–16 as a whole, are designed to subvert the Deuteronomic doctrine of election.

63. Against Perkins (*Parables*, p. 97), to miss out on the banquet *is* to have one's future closed.

64. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 99; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 189.

65. J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 250-52; Lemcio, 'Great Supper', p. 13. Sanders also argues that much of what is seen as redactional anti-Jewish polemic is, in fact, a faith ful reproduction of the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus, but a reproduction that (unconsciously) subverts his original intention.

concern for the poor and marginalized, who are also invited to the banquet. Thus the parable depicts the universal saving will of God.[66] This receives expression in Jesus' willingness to share table fellowship with these folk (5.29-30; 7.33-34; 15.1-2). Care for the marginalized is one of the dominant themes of this Gospel, and indicates Luke's concern that the character of God be echoed in the Christian community. This contrasts not only with the attitude of the Jewish religious authorities, but also with the insistence of the Qumran community on ritual purity at community meals, where no lame, paralysed, deaf, or blind person could attend (1QM 7.4-6; 1QSa 2.6-10).[67] The parable, therefore, both encourages those normally excluded by social convention or ritual law, and rebukes the perpetrators of this social injustice. In this way, Luke has 'deapocalypticized the eschatological banquet', placing it in the context of a concern for daily living.[68]

In this connection, R.L. Rohrbaugh demonstrates how the parable reflects the conditions of a pre-industrial city of the ancient Mediterranean world. The host and the original guests would have been part of the urban elite. Given the demands of honour and solidarity, if one guest refused to attend (he would only do so on the basis that something was perceived to be wrong) all would refuse. Furthermore, in issuing invitations to the marginalized the host breaks with social custom by cutting across the elite/non-elite boundaries of the city. The parable thus demonstrates part of the cost required to follow Jesus, and thus forms an appropriate prelude to the sayings on discipleship that follow in 14.25-34.[69]

A secondary feature for Luke may also include a veiled reference to the Gentile mission, a feature made explicit in Acts (18.6; 28.23-28; cf.

66. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 185-86; H. Klein, 'Botschaft für viele—Nachfolge von wenigen. Überlegungen zu Lk 14,15-35', *EvT* 57 (1997), p. 436, who states, 'Und jederman, der sich laden läßt, hat auch die Chance der Erwählung'.

67. Note how the preceding passage (14.7-12) inverts the seating arrangements laid down for the Community Council and the eschatological meal (1QSa 2.11-21). See J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 263-64.

68. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 144.

69. R.L. Rohrbaugh, 'The Pre-Industrial City in Luke–Acts', in J.H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke–Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 125-49, who finds in the parable a reflection of certain problems amongst the rich, elite members of Luke's community.

3.26).[70] Bailey discusses how, in this sense, the parable of the Great Feast recaptures the vision of Isa. 25.6-9 of a banquet for all nations. This was lost in the intertestamental period, where the banquet was pictured as a judgment scene for the nations (*1 En.* 62.1-16; *Targ. Isa.* 25.6).[71] How ever, there is no basis to see here a reference to the delay in the parousia,[72] or an extended period of Jewish rejection.[73]

The parable also warns about the danger of wealth and possessions (cf. 8.14; 16.13; 17.27-31) and family ties (cf. 14.26; 18.29) as a hindrance to discipleship. As T.W. Manson states, here 'the claims of mammon take precedence'.[74] It is instructive that the following passage (14.25-35) details the cost of discipleship. In so doing, it offers some concrete examples of the ramifications of accepting God's offer of a place at the eschatological banquet.

70. See the discussion above.
71. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 89-92.
72. Against Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 64-65.
73. Against Haenchen, 'Mahl', pp. 154-55.
74. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 130.

Chapter 8

THE PARABLES OF THE LOST (15.1-32)

1. *Introduction to Luke 15*

In its literary setting, ch. 15 continues one of the dominant themes of the Travel Narrative: God's concern for the marginalized and despised (14.15-24; 16.19-31; 17.11-19; 18.9-14; 19.1-10). Thus, in both its literary position and its theological emphasis, this chapter has rightly been described as the heart of the Third Gospel.

The parables of ch. 15 are given a new setting as indicated by vv. 1-2.[1] Two main groups are addressed, the first comprising tax-collectors and sinners. Tax-collectors were ritually defiled by contact with Gentiles and further despised due to their collaboration with the Romans. Sinners represent the immoral, who deliberately and consistently violated the law.[2] This group has already been mentioned by Luke as those

1. For an examination of the various audiences addressed by Jesus in Luke's Gospel, see P.S. Minear, 'Jesus' Audiences according to Luke', *NovT* 16 (1974), pp. 81-109.

2. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 174-211. Sanders disagrees strongly with Jeremias (and the legacy handed down by him) in arguing that the Pharisees did not equate the עם הארץ with 'sinners'. The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was not, therefore, over table fellowship with the common folk, nor the associated issue of ritual purity, but arose because of Jesus' willingness to include sinners in the kingdom of God, apart from the requirements of the ceremonial law, if they responded to his message. This issue is far from settled in New Testament scholarship, as evidenced by Meyer's disapproval of Sanders's criticism of Jeremias and Sanders's subsequent reply (see *JBL* 110 [1991], pp. 451-62; 463-77). Perhaps it is a case of both sides overstating their position somewhat. Those Jews who continually broke the law would include those engaged in occupations that made keeping of the law extremely difficult. As such occupations encompassed donkey drivers, pedlars, tanners and shepherds (see Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 132), a fair proportion of the עם הארץ may well have been despised by the religious authorities. This is

with whom Jesus had table fellowship and whom he befriended (5.30; 7.34).

ἀκούειν makes a subtle allusion to 14.35. In drawing near to hear Jesus, the tax-collectors and sinners comprise those who *do* have ears to hear. The periphrastic construction ἦσαν...ἐγγίζοντες can be taken in two ways, depending on how πάντες[3] is understood. If the latter is hyperbolic (cf. 1.66; 6.30; 12.10) then the imperfect has an iterative force, indicating habitual action. If πάντες is meant to indicate all in a certain place on this particular occasion, the imperfect pictures the actual assembling of the crowd.[4] Given previous incidents (5.30; 7.34), Luke is probably wishing to stress that this is not an isolated incident. This accounts for the use of the present tense προσδέχεται/συνεσθίει which captures the habitual action of the 'friend of sinners' (cf. Mt. 11.19). Hence the grumbling of the religious authorities.

This introduces the other group present on this occasion, the Pharisees and scribes, and, as in 5.30, they are indignant over Jesus' behaviour. οὗτος is emphatic and derogatory. Jesus openly had table fellowship with those with whom the Pharisees refused to associate. Such attitudes are well attested in the Mishnah and other rabbinic sources.[5] The parables of this chapter strongly attack such an attitude.

confirmed by I.M. Zeitlin (*Jesus and the Judaism of his Time* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988], p. 104), who states, 'In sum, an *am ha-aretz* is an ignorant *individual* who fails to educate himself and his children and who neglects or violates the ethical and ceremonial precepts of the twofold Torah' (emphasis retained). See also the study by J.G.D. Dunn, 'Pharisees, Sinners, and Jesus', in J. Neusner *et al.* (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), pp. 264-89; Dunn argues that *sinner* should be understood as a factional term. Against Sanders, he contends that the Pharisees would have been likely to despise those who did not follow the rigorous demands of their sect. Arguing in a different vein to both Sanders and Dunn, D.A. Neale (*None but the Sinners: Religious Categories in the Gospel of Luke* [JSNTSup, 58; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991], pp. 40-97) insists that neither the עם הארץ nor 'sinners' should be seen as distinct social groups in first-century Palestine. Rather, the latter was used by Luke as an ideological category to highlight the prime recipients of the kingdom message. Neale concludes that Jesus' association with such folk should not, therefore, be seen as 'challenge to social conventions based on rabbinic prejudice' (p. 193).

3. Omitted by W and some Latin and Syriac manuscripts.
4. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 367.
5. This is discussed further in Chapter 15, below.

Bultmann,[6] Jeremias[7] and others consider the context to be a Lukan creation, echoing the opposition motif that is prominent in this Gospel (5.29-32; 7.29-30; 11.53). Even so, it is difficult to posit a setting in the ministry of Jesus more appropriate than that given here.[8]

The relationship between the parables of this chapter and those in ch. 16 is disputed.[9] Also problematical is the internal structure of ch. 15

6. Bultmann, *History*, p. 193.

7. J. Jeremias, 'Tradition und Redaktion in Lukas 15', *ZNW* 62 (1971), p. 188, who considers that the introductory setting was composed by Luke in light of 5.29-32. He supports this with a thorough linguistic analysis, and further notes that a parable dealing with shepherds would hardly be addressed to a group of Pharisees. See also Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 235; Schulz, *Die Spruchquelle*, p. 387; Neale, *Sinners*, p. 155. However, Jeremias has overlooked one of the most 'shocking' features of these parables. It is because the audience comprises the religious leaders that the parables create such a dramatic effect. As far as the linguistic evidence is concerned, this may merely indicate that Luke has edited existing material. For the latter proposal, see Farmer, 'Notes', pp. 301-316.

8. Heininger (*Metaphorik*, p. 140), for instance, after arguing for the Lukan creation of 15.1-3, concedes that 'wenngleich sich dahinter eine Erinnerung an die ursprüngliche Situation verbergen mag'.

9. It would appear more sound to stress the structural and thematic unity of ch. 15 than to isolate the Lost Son from the previous two parables and link it to the Dishonest Manager. The latter approach is defended by M.R. Austin, 'The Hypocritical Son', *EvQ* 57 (1985), pp. 307-15. Austin claims that the Lost Son should not be linked to the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin for the following reasons: 1) the refrain of 15.7, 10 cannot be applied to 15.32 for the parable ends on a sour note; 2) the different introductory formula (εἶπεν δὲ); and 3) this would break up the sequence of pairs (Austin is unconvinced by the structural links to 13.1-9). On the other hand, Austin contends that there is a positive correlation between the parables of the Lost Son and the Dishonest Manager (16.1-13). Both parables picture a relationship between two people, both depict the squandering of possessions, and both use soliloquy to decide on a course of action to escape a predicament. Based on these parallels, Austin concludes that the prodigal son, like the dishonest manager, acted out of self-interest, and the manager, like the prodigal son, was welcomed back into his previous role. Austin's argument is, however, flawed at several points, namely: 1) the parable of the Lost Son does not end on a sour note, but is left open-ended; 2) the theme of communal joy unites all three parables of ch. 15; 3) worldly wealth did not fail the manager in 16.1-7, in fact he is praised for the way he used it; 4) there is no indication that the manager was restored to his former position, as was the prodigal son. Nevertheless, Austin correctly notes the links between 15.11-32 and 16.19-31 (the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus). Like the brothers of the rich man, there is a question as to whether the elder brother of the prodigal will repent. Furthermore, neither the rich man nor the elder brother reflects God's heart

itself. The chapter begins and concludes with grumbling, initially by the Pharisees and scribes (15.2), and finally by the elder son (15.28-30). Seen another way, the chapter begins with the opposition of two groups and ends with the opposition of two sons.[10] Following the introductory setting, three parables are presented which depict God's concern for the lost:[11] the Lost Sheep (15.4-7), the Lost Coin (15.8-10) and the Lost Son (15.11-32). Most believe that the three (or at least the final parable) were uttered independently and linked here by a common theme, either by Luke[12] or by a pre-Lukan redactor.[13]

The language (apart from 15.1-3) is clearly not Lukan,[14] and there seems little reason to doubt that the three parables (or at least a condensed version of them) owe their origin to the historical Jesus. Kossen's suggestion, that Luke 15 was composed as an echo of Jer. 31.10-20 (God as shepherd gathering the flock, Rachel weeping for her children, and Ephraim the repentant son), has not found support.[15]

Especially problematical is the relationship between the first and second parables. There have been various proposals. First, both parables may have been taken from Q, with Matthew omitting the Lost Coin and adapting the Lost Sheep to fit his ecclesiastical setting.[16] Second,

for the lost. J.J. Kilgallen ('Luke 15 and 16: A Connection', *Bib* 78 [1997], pp. 369-76) identifies the link between the last parable of ch. 15 and the two of ch. 16 in terms of the need to choose and act wisely.

10. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 140.

11. The singular παραβολή may have originally been attached to one of the parables, or possibly Luke understood the term collectively in the sense of a parabolic discourse (cf. 5.36; 14.7).

12. So Jeremias, 'Redaktion', pp. 181, 185, 188; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1071; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 170.

13. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 140; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 775. Dupont (*Béatitudes*, II, p. 236) points out that if the grouping of the three parables goes back to Jesus himself, it is difficult to explain how they became separated in one strand of the tradition. Many have also drawn attention to the similarity in structure between 15.1-32 and 13.1-9, where an introduction is followed by a parallel description of two events, which in turn is followed by a longer parable along the same theme of repentance. The main difference, of course, is that 13.2-5 does not contain two parables, but two historical events.

14. See Jeremias, 'Redaktion', pp. 172-89.

15. H.B. Kossen, 'Quelques remarques sur l'ordre des paraboles dans Luc xv sur la structure de Matthieu xviii 8-14', *NovT* 1 (1956), pp. 75-80. Schweizer (*Lukas*, p. 161) claims the similarity is accidental.

16. Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, p. 80; Lambrecht, *Astonished*, p. 38.

the Lost Sheep may have been drawn from Q and the Lost Coin from L, with either Luke,[17] or Matthew, or both, adapting the former to fit their respective settings.[18] Third, the Lost Sheep may be from Q, while the Lost Coin may be either a Lukan composition[19] or a composition of the early church.[20] It is also possible that Matthew and Luke present independent versions of the Lost Sheep,[21] with all three parables originating from Luke's special source.

No matter what the precise tradition history of the three parables, in their present setting they are meant to be read as a unit, with each parable informing, and being informed by, the other two to some degree. The common features act as a reinforcement, while the differences are complementary.[22]

2. *The Lost Sheep* (15.4-7)

a. *Introduction*

The parable of the Lost Sheep is also found in Mt. 18.2-13. Although it has the same essential meaning, there are significant differences. Matthew places the parable in the context of church discipline, where it functions as an exhortation to the leaders (i.e. the shepherds) of the Christian community to be responsible for the flock. Here the point is stressed that it is not God's will that any perish, while the result of the search (καὶ ἐὰν γένηται εὑρεῖν αὐτό) is less certain than in Luke (καὶ εὑρὼν).

The question of which is the earlier version continues to be debated without any consensus, and a full discussion is beyond the scope of this study.[23] The main arguments favouring the Matthean version are its

17. So Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1073.

18. See below on the relationship between Mt. 18.12-13 and Lk. 15.4-7.

19. Drury, *Parables*, p. 140.

20. Bultmann, *History*, p. 171.

21. So Jeremias, 'Redaktion', p. 181; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 306; Farmer, 'Notes', p. 305.

22. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 139.

23. Bultmann (*History*, p. 171), Linnemann (*Parables*, p. 65), Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 1074) and Drury (*Parables*, p. 139) favour Matthew. Ellis (*Luke*, p. 197), Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, pp. 151-53) and Donahue (*Gospel in Parable*, p. 148) favour Luke. Jeremias ('Redaktion', pp. 181-85), after a thorough linguistic analysis of Lk. 15.4-10, concludes that Luke has taken over the material from his source virtually

more concise form (particularly the application), and the unlikely possibility that an element of uncertainty would have been added to the tradition. However, Matthew's context is clearly secondary and exhibits clear Matthean redactional patterns.[24] It seems probable, therefore, that we are presented with independent versions of the parable, with significant adaptation occurring in the oral tradition.[25] We should also not rule out the possibility that Jesus, as an itinerant preacher, varied the parable on different occasions.[26]

The parable also appears in the *Gospel of Thomas* (8.107) as a kingdom parable. Here it has clearly undergone Gnostic redaction, for the shepherd is motivated by his greater love for the stray sheep because it was the largest. As Weder points out, this is diametrically opposed to the synoptic version.[27] A version in the gnostic *Gospel of Truth* is also clearly secondary.

b. *Analysis*

The parable begins with the rhetorical question τίς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὑμῶν[28] (cf. 11.5, 11; 14.28; 17.7), which can be taken in two ways. First, it may be arguing *a fortiori*, expecting the audience to deem the action of the shepherd appropriate. In this case the point will be 'if you...how much more God?' However, some have suggested that the question expects a negative response. Such action would be foolish, for the care of the remaining flock would normally be of paramount concern. Thus

unchanged. This, of course, only indicates Lukan priority if both Evangelists drew from the same source.

24. For instance the introductory formula τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ.

25. Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 243; Scott, *Hear*, pp. 411-12; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 175. Both Scott and Weder agree that Luke is closer to the original, but that vv. 5-7 have been adapted or added by the tradition. Schulz (*Die Spruchquelle*, pp. 387-89) maintains that a Q parable has been heavily redacted by both Evangelists.

26. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 600.

27. Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 176-77. Scott (*Hear*, pp. 408-10) has a good discussion. Both W.L. Peterson ('The Parable of the Lost Sheep in the Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptics', *NovT* 23 [1981], pp. 128-47) and Hendrickx (*Parables*, p. 144) argue unconvincingly that the *Gospel of Thomas* version is the more primitive.

28. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 623) observes that this formula occurs only in parabolic or near parabolic discourse, and thus is a pre-Lukan formulation. Jeremias's contention, that such a formula is normally addressed to Jesus' opponents, seems ill-founded (see for instance 14.28; 17.7).

the shepherd's love and concern is extravagant.[29] The question will need to be resolved by an analysis of cultural expectations, though in the end the same point is being made.

An element of shock is introduced into the parable by the mere use of the shepherd analogy. Shepherding was a despised occupation, for it was deemed impossible for a shepherd to adhere to the law. Furthermore, they were often suspected of driving their flocks onto foreign ground and embezzling the produce of the flock.[30] Therefore, by identifying his audience with shepherds, Jesus is, at the outset, making a powerful attack on Pharisaic prejudice.[31]

Luke's use of the perfect participle τὸ ἀπολωλός highlights the lost state of the sheep. The term has a more desperate sense than Matthew's πλανάω, which is more suited to the latter's ecclesiastical setting. Nevertheless, πλανάω may be the original reading, with Luke using ἀπόλλυμι as a link word to the other two parables in the chapter. ἀπόλλυμι also better paves the way for the interpretive link to the repentant sinner in v. 7 (cf. 'sinners' in v. 1).

It is not entirely clear how we should understand the status of the ninety-nine[32] left in the desert.[33] Against Scott, the text does not imply that they were abandoned,[34] for Jeremias points out that they would never have been left alone, but driven into a cave or left in the care of another.[35] Derrett, on the other hand, believes that the ninety-nine, representing the just who have not strayed, should be seen in the light

29. Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 56; Perkins, *Parables*, p. 31.

30. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 133. *m. Qid.* 4.14 states, 'A man should not teach his son to be an ass-driver or a camel-driver, or a barber or a sailor, or a herdsman or a shopkeeper, for their craft is the craft of robbers'. See also *b. Sanh.* 25b. The rabbis even attempted to excuse David's use of the shepherd metaphor by arguing that he merely appealed to earlier tradition, namely to Jacob's use in Gen. 48.15 (*Midr. Ps.* 23.2).

31. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 147. Consequently, Jeremias's contention, that Luke's setting is secondary on the grounds that the parable is addressed to shepherds, lacks weight.

32. The use of ninety-nine/one imagery was not uncommon, as evidenced by *m. Pe'ah* 4.1-2.

33. Given the Palestinian setting, Luke's ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ parallels Matthew's ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη.

34. Scott, *Hear*, p. 411, who tries to find a link with 1 Kgs 22.17 and Ezek. 34.6, where Israel is depicted as sheep scattered over the mountains.

35. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 133.

of Ezek. 34.13-14, 23-25, where the flock dwells securely and is nourished upon the mountains of Israel.[36] However, the Ezekiel context follows God's gathering the scattered sheep and restoring them under the new shepherd David. Probably we should not press the details of the parable. The point is that the ninety-nine do not need to be found. Borsch expresses it well in saying that it is not that the ninety-nine do not count, but that love has a way of bending to those in need (cf. 5.31-32).[37]

Upon finding the sheep the shepherd places it on his shoulders and rejoices. This action appears to have been commonplace, for a stray sheep would not move on its own even if prodded.[38] Nonetheless, it does emphasise the tender love and concern of the shepherd (cf. Isa. 40.11) and conveys a sense of jubilation in the victory of the search.[39]

The joy continues upon the arrival home. The shepherd calls together his friends and neighbours for a community celebration.[40] Bailey believes that this is evidence that the shepherd was not necessarily a well-to-do man, for he was not the owner of the whole flock. He may have been an employee of the community who was given responsibility for the sheep.[41] On the other hand, it can be seen as yet another instance of extravagance, which compels the reader to look beyond the story for a suitable referent.[42] This referent is then supplied in v. 7 as the boundless joy of God.

λέγω ὑμῖν is a typical Lukan introduction[43] to a pronouncement of

36. J.D.M. Derrett, 'Fresh Light on the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin', *NTS* 26 (1979), p. 59.

37. Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 60.

38. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 134; Bailey, *Lost*, p. 74. The image is also found in *Exod. R.* 2 (68b), where, because of Moses' caring attitude in bringing back one of Jethro's lost sheep on his shoulders, God appoints him shepherd of his flock Israel.

39. J.M. Trau, 'The Lost Sheep: A Living Metaphor', *BibTod* 28 (1990), p. 282.

40. Some, such as Linnemann (*Parables*, p. 68) and Nolland (*Luke*, pp. 772, 776), believe that this verse was created to harmonize with the second parable. This is possible, but given the fact that Jesus sometimes told stories in pairs (13.18-21; 14.28-32), it is not necessary.

41. Bailey *Lost*, p. 102. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 148) points out that an average family would have between five and fifteen sheep. However, if this was a community flock we might have expected the pronoun to read ἡμῶν, not μου.

42. As Ernst (*Lukas*, p. 453) states, 'Die Sachhälfte schiebt sich mehr und mehr in das Bild hinein'.

43. Most agree that although there are Lukan words and motifs present in the

Jesus, with οὕτως making the comparison. ἔσται is best seen as a logical future, not a reference to the final judgment.[44] A similar joy occurs in heaven whenever one sinner repents. Joy is a typical Lukan motif,[45] which not only appears in each of the three parables in this chapter, but is also mentioned on three occasions in this parable.

The comparative πλείων is to be understood with ἤ. Again we are confronted with Lukan hyperbole. The sense is not that there is no joy at all over the ninety-nine who do not need to repent, rather the focus falls on the penitent sinner. Repentance is a favourite motif of Luke, especially in the Travel Narrative.[46]

It is difficult to agree with those who insist that the link with repentance must be a secondary application, added during transmission. It is claimed that the sheep (and coin) are not appropriate symbols for repentance, for they are simply found. Indeed, repentance is nowhere mentioned in the parable proper. Rather, the point of the parable is to highlight the joy of God over the lost-now-found.[47] Nolland, for example, believes that this application was appended in order to promote a mission consciousness in the early church.[48]

In rebutting such assertions, Bailey rightly questions in what sense

application(s), on linguistic grounds they clearly predate Luke. See Farmer, 'Notes', p. 305; Jeremias, 'Redaktion', p. 185; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 170.

44. So Nolland, *Luke*, p. 773, against Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 135-36, and Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1077.

45. 1.14, 47; 2.10; 10.20-21; 13.17; 15.10; 24.52; Acts 2.46.

46. 5.32; 13.3, 5; 17.4; 18.13; 19.1-10; Acts 2.38. For a discussion of the theme of repentance in the Lukan parables see D.M. Parrott, 'The Dishonest Steward (Luke 16:1-8a) and Luke's Special Parable Collection', *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 499-515, and also chapter 13, below.

47. For example, Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 244; I. Broer, 'Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn und die Theologie des Lukas', *NTS* 20 (1973), p. 459; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1073; Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 57; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 585; Petzke, *Sondergut*, p. 138; Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 140-46. Some (e.g. Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 175, 249) see vv. 6-7, 9-10 in their entirety as secondary, though certainly pre-Lukan. Weder then contends that here we encounter the danger of seeing repentance as a prerequisite for salvation (p. 251). While he is correct with regard to this parable in isolation, it would be fair to say that for the proclamation of Jesus as a whole, repentance *is* a prerequisite for salvation. This is accentuated in the parable of the Prodigal Son. This does not deny the prior activity of God, nor does it necessarily regard repentance as a work of merit.

48. Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 772, 776.

the lost person can be found without repentance occurring.[49] In this connection, it is crucial to consider the parable in light of the proclamation of Jesus as a whole. It has already been observed that repentance is a dominant Lukan motif, but this does not necessarily imply that such references are a creation of the Evangelist. Rather, it gives us insight into the criteria by which Luke selected his material. Indeed, there is little reason to doubt that Jesus himself frequently challenged his hearers to a decision involving repentance (for instance, Mk 1.14-15; Mt. 11.20; Lk. 12.59; 13.1-5). If, as was argued in chapter 1, applications which anchor a parable are regarded as secondary, then we are forced to understand Jesus as a teacher of vague moral truths. If this is so, the parable loses most of its 'shocking' impact upon the scribes and Pharisees. Again, the evidence points us in another direction, namely that Jesus profoundly challenged his hearers with concrete expectations and a blunt call to commitment.[50] Thus, even though repentance is only implicit in the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin, it would arguably have been presumed even in the original setting.

In fact, taken as a whole, the three parables adeptly reflect the tension between divine sovereignty and human response that characterize the Scriptures. The first two parables reflect a common Lukan motif by stressing the initiative of God in salvation:[51] he seeks us out. The third parable emphasizes human response: God waits for the lost to return.[52] Again, there seems little reason to doubt that this tension was reflected in both the teachings and the actions of the historical Jesus.

Another factor which supports the idea that repentance is implied in the first two parables proper is the structural unity of the entire chapter.

49. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 155. Also D. Wenham, *Parables*, p. 101; R. Riesner, 'Prägung und Herkunft der lukanischen Sonderüberlieferung', *TBei* 24 (1993), p. 236. In fact Nolland (*Luke*, p. 772), apparently in contradiction of his above claim, argues that it is difficult to see how vv. 8-10 could ever have existed without a reference to repentance. Lambrecht (*Astonished*, p. 40), in attempting to reconstruct the original Q application, proposes, 'I tell you, just so there will be joy in heaven over one sinner...more than over ninety-nine...'. We might well ask how this application could have been phrased without evoking the idea of repentance!

50. Dupont (*Béatitudes*, II, p. 246) makes essentially the same point in stating, 'Il importe de se demander si Jésus se contente d'enseigner une vérité générale, l'amour de Dieu pour les pécheurs, sans établir aucune relation précise entre cette vérité et la situation concrète de son ministère'.

51. 1.46-55, 68-79; 2.10-13, 28-32; 4.18-19; 14.16-24; 19.1-10.

52. Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 181.

The theme of joy and communal celebration not only binds each of the parables together, it also links both halves of the parable of the Prodigal Son (15.24, 32). It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that all three parables are teaching the same essential point. While repentance is only implicit in 15.4-6, 8-9, it undergirds the thought of the entire chapter and surfaces more explicitly in the final parable.[53]

Bailey argues at some length that repentance is explicit in Lk. 15.4-7, for the parable needs to be understood with respect to three Old Testament texts which all develop a similar theme. First, in Ps. 23.3 the lost sheep is restored by the Good Shepherd and then dwells in the house of God. Second, Jer. 23.1-8 tells of the leaders (bad shepherds) who have scattered the sheep (Israel) and are called to account. God then acts to bring back the sheep and raise up faithful shepherds to care for them. Third, in Ezek. 34.1-24 God seeks out the lost sheep of Israel, restores them to the land and to himself, and binds up the injured. Thus the structure of Lk. 15.4-7 is based on Psalm 23, but incorporates aspects of Jer. 23.1-8 and Ezekiel 34. Moreover, it is Ps. 23.3 which demonstrates why the shepherd goes after the sheep. It is not primarily for the sheep's sake, but for the shepherd's sake. God acts to protect his name, that is, his own integrity and holiness (cf. Ezek. 36.22-23). The communal celebration (Lk. 15.6) can then be seen as joy over the preservation of the shepherd's integrity.[54]

While Bailey has made some important observations, especially regarding the issue of integrity, it would appear that his argument concerning the dependence of Lk. 15.4-7 on Psalm 23 is somewhat forced. To obtain the sense he proposes, נפשי ישובב (Ps. 23.3) must be understood, against the weight of interpretation, in the sense of forgiveness of sin.[55] Furthermore, in Jer. 23.1-8 the idea is of a restoration to the land, not repentance as such. It does seem, however, that more of a case could be made for dependence upon Ezekiel 34, which combines the imagery of lost and found, binding up the injured (possibly the idea of

53. Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 234.

54. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 63-92. E.R. Wendland ('Finding Some Lost Aspects of Meaning in Christ's Parables of the Lost—and Found [Luke 15]', *TrinJ* 17 [1996], pp. 51-57) also discusses Ps. 23 as an intertextual possibility.

55. D. Kidner (*Psalms 1–72* [TOTC; London: IVP, 1973], p. 110) mentions this possibility. The polel form of שׁוב does carry the sense of repentance in Isa. 49.5 (the restoration of Jacob to God), though it is more frequently used of the restoration to the land or of the land (Isa. 58.12; Jer. 50.19; Ezek. 39.27).

sin/forgiveness is most prominent here), and a messianic focus. Nevertheless, the parable is probably based not on a single text, but on the tradition in its entirety.

Another question concerns the precise status of the δίκαιοι who do not need to repent. First, it should be noted that Luke is not averse to using this term, for he so designates several characters in his Gospel (1.6; 2.25; 23.50; cf. Acts 10.22). In these instances the impression conveyed is of one faithful to the law, not only in external piety, but in a right standing with God.[56] The term is also found on the lips of Jesus, who, in response to previous complaints by the scribes and Pharisees,[57] claims that his mission involved the calling of sinners, not the righteous, to repentance (5.31 par.; Mk 2.17 par.; Mt. 9.13). Seen in this light, the righteous of 15.7 are those who already stand in a right relationship with God.[58]

Another possibility is that the reference is ironical, referring to the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees who felt they had no need to repent. For Bailey, they are the ninety-nine in the wilderness and correspond also to the nine drachmae and the elder son. They have not been abandoned, but they too need to come home (as vv. 25-32 make clear).[59] A third view regards the saying as mere hyperbole, designed to stress the extreme joy over the one found.[60]

While there may well be a reference to the self-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees in the character of the elder son (vv. 25-32), this would appear unwarranted here. We have already observed that Luke's use of the term is elsewhere positive. This leaves the first and last options, which should not be seen as mutually exclusive. The righteous may be those who do not need to repent, but the point is not that there is

56. See G. Schrenk, 'δίκαιος', *TDNT*, II, pp. 189-90.

57. The claim of Jeremias (see n. 7, above), that Luke has composed the setting for ch. 15 in light of this incident, fails to impress. It is difficult to conceive, given Jesus' habitual practice, that such grumbling would be an isolated episode.

58. Neale, *Sinners*, pp. 162-64, who believes this demonstrates that Luke's portrait of the Pharisees is not consistent.

59. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 89-91. Also Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 369; Trau, 'Lost Sheep', p. 281; R. Meynet, *L'évangile selon saint Luc.* II. *Commentaire* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), p. 165; Wendland, 'Parables of the Lost', p. 60. Bailey seems to make too much out of the ninety-nine left in the desert. As Dupont (*Béatitudes*, II, p. 246) remarks, they are accessory elements of the story and should not be dwelt upon.

60. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1078; D. Wenham, *Parables*, p. 101.

no joy over them. The contrast is used simply to underline the joy over the penitent sinner.

ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ is possibly a reverential periphrasis, designed to avoid attributing emotion to God, an idea that was unacceptable to the rabbis.[61] However, it may be designed to illustrate the extent of the joy: it fills the entire heavenly court (cf. 15.10).

c. *Interpretation*

What then is the purpose of the parable of the Lost Sheep? Given the common Old Testament metaphor of Yahweh as shepherd and Israel (or members thereof) as the sheep which have strayed,[62] it seems clear that God is represented by the shepherd who seeks out the lost.[63] The parable is thus a proclamation of divine grace, illustrating the value that God places on things that have seemingly little value. Moreover, not only has God lost something highly valued, God feels for the lost.[64] Consequently, he seeks them out until they are found. Seen in these terms, the parable supports the Pharisaical notion of a God who forgives, but it radically extends this to a God who seeks.

Obviously this has important christological significance, for while the shepherd metaphor has God as its ultimate referent, it is clear from both the teachings and actions of Jesus that it is he through whom God now

61. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 135; Bailey, *Lost*, p. 85.

62. Ps. 23.1-3; 100.3; 119.176; Isa. 40.11; Jer. 31.10; Ezek. 34.1-31; Zech. 9.16.

63. It is difficult to accept the view of Crossan (*In Parables*, p. 72) who argues that the seeker is not God (or Jesus), for he has never been identified as the Good Housewife (i.e. 15.8-10). Rather, the one who searches is the seeker of the advent of the kingdom. Similarly Scott (*Hear*, p. 417), who contends that the shepherd is not God but possibly a foolish shepherd who gambles all in a situation where the outcome is uncertain. Another approach is furnished by Perrin (*Rediscovering*, p. 100), who claims that the first two parables are stories of a crisis that brings a change in values and a new situation of joy and gladness. Thus there is a transition from panic to pleasure. In responding to such proposals, it is evident that they each exhibit three presuppositions, each of which is debatable to a greater or lesser degree, and each of which has already been discussed at some length. First, there is a reluctance to endorse the setting provided by Luke as authentic. Second, there is a reluctance to see any allegorical features in a parable. Third, there is a reluctance to interpret the parable. As can be seen, in following this hermeneutical approach we are simply left with vague generalities.

64. Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 67; J.M. Boice, *The Parables of Jesus* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), p. 50; Trau, 'Lost Sheep', p. 280.

acts. In other words, by responding in such a way to the murmurings of the religious establishment, Jesus not only defends his association with sinners by alluding to the character of God as shepherd, his actions echo the messianic prophecies of Ezek. 34.23 and Mic. 5.4. Jesus acts as the shepherd king whom the prophets foretold (cf. Mk 6.34; Lk. 12.32). His role is to seek out and save the lost (19.10), and, by necessity, he must associate with the lost in order to return them to the fold.[65] Thus, in the process of defending his ministry and message, Jesus expounds the nature of divine grace in order to correct the faulty notions of the religious leaders.[66] In fact, Jesus, as God's agent of grace, is so concerned for the lost that he is willing to suffer reproach for his actions,[67] a reproach that would ultimately lead to the cross.[68] In another strand of the tradition, this christological claim was given fuller development with the Good Shepherd metaphor (Jn 10.11; cf. 1 Pet. 2.25; 5.4).

Keeping in mind the above, it is clear that the parable also has eschatological significance, for Jesus carries out what is expected of the eschatological reign of God. The new age has begun. Seen in this sense, the parable of the Lost Sheep functions indirectly as a kingdom parable.

There is probably another factor at work in the shepherd analogy. In the Old Testament the metaphor was used not only of God, but also of

65. This is given actual expression in the restoration of Zacchaeus, the chief tax-collector and concrete example of the lost son, in 19.1-10. It is no coincidence that this event occurs at the conclusion of the Travel Narrative, for Jesus concludes his journey by giving an example of the salvation he has proclaimed. See P. Jones, 'La parabole du fils prodigue: Deux méthodes d'interprétation', *RevRéf* 34 (1983), p. 136. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 82-83) notes the parallels between 15.4-7 and 19.1-10. In both cases: 1) elements in the crowd grumble; 2) the lost sheep (Zacchaeus) is sought out by Jesus; and 3) a communal banquet ensues.

66. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, p. 586) wrongly separates these two intentions, as if it were an either/or situation.

67. Derrett, 'Lost', pp. 48-49. Derrett compares this readiness of Jesus to suffer reproach to a similar readiness of any Jew to suffer the reproach of the law for rescuing an entrapped sheep on the sabbath (Mt. 12.11-12). The point is this: where personal loss is involved, obedience to the scribal law is considered secondary. For Jesus, then, a lost sinner is a personal loss.

68. Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 252) points out that for the post-Easter community, once the parable is interpreted in terms of repentance it already has christological significance, for repentance is now inseparably bound up with Jesus.

the political and religious leaders of Israel (2 Sam. 5.2; Jer. 2.8; Ezek. 34.1). Bearing in mind that the current religious leaders are the prime target of the parables of Luke 15, they are then confronted with the startling accusation that they, as the shepherds of the nation, have lost part of the flock.[69] In so doing, they have mirrored the reprehensible actions of past leaders (1 Kgs 22.17; Jer. 23.1-4). Bailey shows how this indictment is achieved by the wording of v. 4. In Middle Eastern culture blame is never attributed to oneself. Rather than say 'I lost the sheep', it would be more acceptable to say 'the sheep went astray' (cf. Mt. 18.12). Consequently, the verse is jarring, giving a picture of a bad shepherd who has lost his sheep. Jesus is saying that because the Pharisees and scribes have failed properly to tend the flock of Israel, he himself must recover the lost (cf. Mk 6.34).[70] In addition, the story confronts the religious authorities with their own prejudice by graphically reminding them that they indeed have the occupation they so despise. As shepherds they are exhorted to mimic the attitudes and care for the flock that is expressed in the parable. In real terms this will mean not grumbling about Jesus' association with the tax-collectors and sinners, but showing due compassion for the lost.

Leaving aside the shepherd metaphor, another significant point made by the parable is that of communal joy in the instance of the lost-now-found. This theme unites each of the three parables in this chapter, and is the stated main theme of the parable. As such, it is a shocking indictment on the attitude of the Pharisees and scribes, an attitude reflected not only in their displeasure with the actions of Jesus, but also in the rabbinic belief that God delights in the downfall of the wicked.[71] Rather than murmuring and opposing the ministry of Jesus, therefore, they too should join in the communal celebration over the restoration of the sinner.[72] That repentance underlies this restoration cannot be

69. It is reasonable to assume that given such passages as Ps. 119.176 and Ezek. 34.11-16, Jesus' hearers would have understood the lost sheep as the lost of Israel (cf. Mt. 10.6; 15.24).

70. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 66-67; Neale, *Sinners*, p. 158.

71. *b. Sanh.* 113b states, 'And when the wicked perish there is exultation'. Contrast this with Ezek. 18.23; 33.11, where God does not delight in the destruction of the wicked (see further chapter 15, below). G. Scobel ('Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn als metakommunikative Text: Überlegungen zur Verständigungsproblematik in Lukas 15', *FZPT* 35 [1988], p. 54) feels that an allusion to the Ezekiel passages undergirds the rejoicing imagery.

72. Blomberg (*Parables*, p. 181) sees the religious leaders represented by the

doubted, and this has already been discussed at some length.[73]

Another feature of the parable, though certainly inseparable from what has been said above, is the concern of God (and hence Jesus) for the outcast and the marginalized. This continues one of the dominant themes of Luke's Gospel and clearly was an important issue for the Evangelist.[74]

Bailey also finds in the parable a soteriological theme which he labels *joy in the burden of restoration.* In placing the sheep on his shoulders, the shepherd pays a physical cost to restore the sheep. He notes depictions of this scene in the churches of the Middle East in the early Christian era, depictions which possibly stood as a symbol for the atonement.[75] In a similar vein, Derrett discovers redemptive overtones in both this parable and that of the Lost Coin. The bringing of the lamb and the sweeping of the house of unleavened material were necessary preparations for the Passover. Both images are captured here.[76] However, it is perhaps stretching the confines of the parable a little too far to find such soteriological themes therein.

3. *The Lost Coin (15.8-10)*

a. *Analysis*

The parable of the Lost Coin forms a pair with the Lost Sheep, and seems to reflect a fondness that Jesus had for telling stories in pairs with the same essential meaning.[77] In this instance, the subject is a woman who has ten drachmae and loses one of them.[78]

ninety-nine/nine. They must never presume that their numbers are adequate. While one is lost they must never be satisfied.

73. Schweizer (*Lukas*, p. 161) claims that as joy is the only thing mentioned in the application, this is the point of the parable. Nevertheless, two comments are appropriate here. First, we are compelled to ask *joy over what?* Second, as discussed in Chapter 1, a parable may legitimately have more than one point.

74. Discussed further in Chapter 13, Section 1 below.

75. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 75-76.

76. Derrett, 'Lost', pp. 44-45.

77. See, for instance, Mk 4.26-32 (Seed Growing Secretly/Mustard Seed—linked with καὶ ἔλεγεν), Mt. 13.44-45 (Hidden Treasure/Pearl of Great Price—linked with πάλιν), Lk. 13.18-21 (Mustard Seed/Leaven—linked with καὶ πάλιν εἶπεν) and Lk. 14.28-32 (Foolish Builder/Foolish King—linked with ἤ, as in 15.8).

78. There is a similar rabbinic parable concerning ten coins, though the subject is a man, not a woman, and the lost coin represents the words of the Torah (*Cant. R.* 1.9).

Jesus does not directly compare his audience to a woman in the same way that he compares them to a shepherd in the previous parable. The story simply begins with τίς γυνή, compared to τίς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὑμῶν in v. 4. Nevertheless, Bailey points out that such a pairing of male/female imagery is almost non-existent in Middle Eastern sacred literature. However, it does appear in Isa. 42.13-14 and various instances in the Gospels.[79] He feels that Jesus does this for two main reasons. First, against a culture which devalued the role of women to the extent that a pious male Jew would regularly thank God that he had not been born a woman,[80] Jesus stresses the importance of women in the kingdom of God. Second, he wishes to communicate more specifically to his female disciples.[81]

The introductory ἤ indicates that the two parables are synonymous.[82] The drachma was a Greek silver coin, approximately equal to the Roman denarius, a day's wages. In 300 BC it represented the value of a

79. Mt. 5.14-15; Lk. 4.24-27; 5.36-39; 7.11-17; 8.1-3, 49-56; 13.18-21. See Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 97-99, for a complete list. In addition, Luke seems to have a real concern for women in his Gospel (see the literature cited in Chapter 13, n. 7), for they often appear as the devout of Israel, alongside a male counterpart (1.5-20, 26-38; 1.46-55, 68-79; 2.26-38; cf. 10.38-42). It should also be noted that God is portrayed using female imagery on a number of occasions in the Old Testament (Deut. 32.18; Isa. 42.13-14; 49.13-15; 66.7-9,13; Jer. 31.20; Hos. 11.1-4).

80. See the daily prayer preserved in *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1912), p. 7.

81. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 93-100. This contrasts with the views of S. Durber, 'The Female Reader of the Parables of the Lost', *JSNT* 45 (1992), pp. 59-78, who claims that the parables of Luke 15 only reinforce sexist values. Women appear only twice: once as a domestic housewife and once as whores. In 15.4-10 the poor housewife is compared to the man 'who roams the open land with his substantial property' (p. 62). Durber's observations are fair enough to a point. However, she neglects to mention that shepherding was a despised profession at the time, nor does she take into account the fact that the shepherd was not necessarily the owner of the sheep. Rather than supposing that the text assumes a male reader, it would perhaps be more correct to say that it assumes a first-century reader. For a completely different viewpoint to that of Durber, see A. Batten, 'Dishonour, Gender and the Parable of the Prodigal Son', *TJT* 13 (1997), pp. 187-200, who argues that the parable of the Lost Son actually subverts patriarchal values by having the father focus on the unity of the family rather than on issues of honour/dishonour.

82. Plummer (*St. Luke*, p. 369) believes that this use of the disjunctive particle possibly reflects a colloquial usage whereby μᾶλλον is understood.

sheep, but during the first century had suffered significant depreciation.[83] Jeremias's suggestion, that the ten coins may have been strung together and worn as a headdress by the woman, has been followed by a number of interpreters.[84] Others have countered that pierced coins were rare in the ancient Near East,[85] or that the practice has no known connection with Galilee.[86] Other possibilities are that the ten drachmae represent the woman's life savings, or that she has been entrusted with the financial management of the home.[87]

The search for the lost coin is certainly given more detail than the search for the lost sheep. The woman lights a lamp, hoping to catch the glint of the coin. This would be necessary for the house would have had little or no natural light.[88] She then sweeps the floor, hoping to hear the coin tinkle.[89] The urgency here might be explained by a number of factors, including the need for personal integrity,[90] ceremonial law,[91] or the mere value of the coin.

Once more there is communal joy over the object found, with the analogy again drawn to the joy experienced in heaven on the occasion of one sinner who repents.[92] Here, τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ θεοῦ replaces ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ (v. 7), though clearly the terms are synonymous, indicating that joy extends to the entire heavenly court.[93]

83. See W. Pesch, 'δραχμή' *EDNT*, I, pp. 353-54. Marshall (*Luke*, p. 603) believes that Luke may have translated the amount into coinage familiar to his readers. Bailey (*Lost*, p. 56), on the other hand, sees it as evidence of the authenticity of the story, for the drachma was replaced by the denarius during the reign of Nero in 54–68 CE.

84. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 134-35. See also Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 162.

85. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 102.

86. Derrett, 'Lost', p. 41. Derrett also argues that the drachma was too small for such a practice.

87. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 102-103.

88. See Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 100-102, for a description of such houses uncovered by the Franciscans while excavating ancient Capernaum.

89. Derrett ('Lost', p. 41) states that the drachma was dished, not circular, and would not have rolled far.

90. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 104. The woman entrusted with the financial management of the home is concerned to protect her integrity and capability.

91. According to *m. Ṭoh.* 8.3, if money remained lost overnight it was considered ceremonially unclean.

92. For a discussion of the authenticity of this verse and its application, see §2 above on the parable of the Lost Sheep.

93. See the discussion on v. 7. A.F. Walls ('"In the Presence of the Angels"

b. *Interpretation*

The Lost Coin makes the same essential point as the Lost Sheep. The search by the woman corresponds to the search by God (Jesus) for the lost sinner.[94] The themes of repentance and joy are also prominent. Possibly there is also a deliberate attempt to elevate the worth of women.[95]

4. *The Lost Son (15.11-32)*

a. *Introduction*

The theme of the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin continues, though now we have a longer, more personal story with three main characters. Traditionally titled in English *the Prodigal Son*, the German title *der verlorene Sohn* is more apt given the preceding two parables.

In this parable, the younger of two sons becomes unsettled with life on the family estate and requests his share of the inheritance, only to squander it recklessly in a foreign land. Upon his return home he is welcomed and received by his father, who then orders a communal feast. This arouses the indignation of the elder brother, who resents such treatment of one so undeserving. The parable ends with the matter of the elder son's attitude unresolved. Though commentators have been divided as to whether the father,[96] the younger son[97] or the elder son[98] is

[Luke xv,10]', *NovT* 3 [1959], pp. 314-16) proposes that the idea here is of God rejoicing before the angels, thus giving the heavenly equivalent of the seeker involved in communal celebration. The view of J.T. Rook ('Rejoicing in Heaven? The Lost in Luke 15', *McMastJT* 3.2 [1993], p. 54 n. 8), that the text is sexist on the basis that 'the woman's story seems to take second place even in heaven's rejoicing, is completely untenable.

94. Plummer (*Saint Luke*, p. 370), obviously reluctant to see God portrayed by a woman, contends that the woman represents the church.

95. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 105-106) probably makes too much out of the parable in seeing the dark room and the intensive search as allegories for sin and costly grace respectively.

96. For example, R. Pesch, 'Zur Exegese Gottes durch Jesus von Nazaret: Eine Auslegung des Gleichnisses vom Vater und den beiden Söhnen (Lk 15,11-32)', in B. Casper (ed.), *Jesus: Ort der Erfahrung Gottes* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976), pp. 179-89; Stein, *Parables*, p. 122; Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 152; Johnson, *Luke*, p. 240; G.W. Ramsey, 'Plots, Gaps, Repetitions and Ambiguity in Luke 15', *PRS* 17 (1990), p. 41; Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 109-193.

97. Scott, *Hear*, p. 105.

98. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 275.

the pivotal player in the story, all three characters play a crucial role and contribute to the overall interpretation of the parable.

The parable falls logically into two parts. Verses 11-24 deal with the father and the younger son, while vv. 25-32 concern the father and the elder son. Although most regard the parable as authentic, J.T. Sanders has argued that part two is a Lukan adaptation aimed against the Pharisees and constructed to form a link with ch. 16.[99] On the other hand, Schottroff[100] and Drury,[101] while defending the unity of the parable, regard it as a Lukan creation in its entirety. More recently, Heininger has proposed that the original parable consisted only of vv. 11-17, 20, 22-23, 24c.[102]

While Jeremias,[103] O'Rourke[104] and Carlston[105] have conclusively ruled out on linguistic grounds the possibility that Luke created any portion of the parable, its authenticity is further supported by the following. First, the elder son is mentioned at the outset (vv. 11-12); this is redundant if he plays no further part in the story. Second, the parable builds up an inner tension, with the law of end-stress suggesting a final climax.[106] Third, if Luke created vv. 25-32 as an attack on the Pharisees, we would have expected a far harsher portrayal of the father's

99. J.T. Sanders, 'Tradition and Redaction in Luke xv:11-32', *NTS* 15 (1968), pp. 433-38. Sanders bases his argument on two main factors: 1) vv. 25-32 exhibit fewer Semitisms and more Lukanisms than vv. 11-24; and 2) this is the only genuine two-part (*zweigipfelig*) parable we have.

100. L. Schottroff, 'Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn', *ZTK* 68 (1971), pp. 27-52. Schottroff also regards the parable as a later Christian polemic against the Pharisees, whom she claims could not have recognized themselves in the figure of the elder son. Furthermore, the themes of repentance and forgiveness are characteristic of Lukan soteriology. Regarding the latter point, C.E. Carlston ('Reminiscence and Redaction in Luke 15:11-32', *JBL* 94 [1975], pp. 368-90) argues that the understanding of repentance presented in this parable is not Lukan. Luke has more of a moral emphasis, stressing the fruits of repentance. Here the younger son simply returns and is accepted by his father.

101. Drury, *Parables,* pp. 143-47. Drury wrongly contends that Luke has constructed the story as an allegory of salvation history, stressing the widening rift between traditional Judaism and Gentile Christianity. See the interpretation of the parable, below.

102. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, pp. 146-53.

103. Jeremias, 'Redaktion', pp. 172-81.

104. J.J. O'Rourke, 'Some Notes on Luke xv:11-32', *NTS* 18 (1971), pp. 431-33.

105. Carlston, 'Reminiscence', pp. 368-90.

106. See Lambrecht, *Astonished*, pp. 32-33; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 781.

relationship to the elder son, and it is extremely unlikely that the parable would have been left open-ended.[107] Fourth, in an illuminating study, Aus has argued that our parable draws on a Semitic/ Jewish folk-tale, and thus clearly does not owe its origins to Hellenist Luke.[108] Fifth, Tolbert has demonstrated the unity of both halves of the parable on the basis of structural parallels.[109] Sixth, Pöhlmann has shown how the protest of the hearer is reflected in the protest of the elder son. This protest is crucial to the story, for by it the hearer is confronted with a new view of οἶκος, that of the kingdom of God.[110] Seventh, it must be stressed that Lukan themes are not necessarily Lukan creations.[111] Finally, the orientation of the parable parallels the general teaching of Jesus elsewhere.[112] On the whole, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the parable as a whole is an authentic creation of Jesus.

A number of suggestions have been proposed for a suitable background for the parable of the Lost Son. While there are a number of parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature[113] and the papyri,[114] they lack the moving force of this story.[115]

107. Stein, *Parables*, p. 117; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 781.

108. R.D. Aus, 'Luke 15:11-32 and R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus's Rise to Fame', *JBL* 104 (1985), pp. 443-69.

109. Tolbert, *Parables*, pp. 98-100. Tolbert demonstrates how both halves of the parable alternate between narrative discourse and direct discourse:

ND	vv. 12b-16 younger son's journey away
DD	vv. 17-19 younger son's decision to return
ND	v. 20 father's reception of the younger son
DD	vv. 21-24a younger son's confession and father's response
ND	vv. 24b-26 elder son's return home
DD	v. 27 servant's explanation
ND	v. 28 father's reception of the elder son
DD	vv. 29-32 elder son's accusation and father's response

110. Pöhlmann, *Haus*, pp. 188-89.

111. Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 254) correctly states, '...ist das Argument *schon aus methodischen Gründen* fragwürdig, fuß es doch auf dem Axiom, daß ein Theologumenon eines Evangelisten mit der Verkündigung Jesu gar nicht übereinstimmen *könne*' (italics retained). Compare this with Heininger's reconstruction of the original parable, where vv. 18-19, 21, 24a-b are deleted due to the explicit and implicit mention of repentance (*Metaphorik*, pp. 146-53).

112. Broer, 'Das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn', pp. 453-62.

113. See Rau, *Reden in Vollmacht*, pp. 216-94, who examines parallels from Philo and the rabbis to confirm his thesis that the form of Jesus' parables follows late Israelite religious thought, which in turn was influenced by the Hellenistic–

Aus has investigated the correlation between Lk. 15.11-32 and the rabbinic parable of the rise to fame of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. The clear differences between the stories (Eliezer's father accepts him on the basis of his becoming a great rabbinic scholar) indicate that neither one is dependent upon the other. However, Aus proposes that both drew on a common, oral folk-tale of Semitic origin.[116]

It is clear that a number of strands of Old Testament tradition form a significant backdrop to this parable. While the younger son is clearly no hero, there are similarities between Lk. 15.11-32 and the Joseph story. The images of the far country, jealousy of the elder brother(s), ring/clothes/banquet, famine, and reconciliation to the father, all recall elements of Genesis 37–50.[117] Similarly, the loving acceptance of the father for the prodigal recalls the mercy of God shown for a repentant Ephraim (Jer. 31.18-20; cf. 1 Kgs 8.47-51; Hos. 11.1-9; Ps. 103.13). In his recent monograph, Bailey analyses Luke 15 in light of Psalm 23, finding thirteen common motifs.[118] However, rather than simply considering one of the above as the background to our text, it seems wise to agree with Drury that the parable of the Lost Son embodies 'a mosaic of OT reminiscences'.[119]

Roman rhetoric schools. These parallels exhibit the model of a father with two sons, one moral and the other immoral, or a father with a rebellious son. However, Rau finds that nowhere (apart from the *Sedrach Apocalypse* 6.4-6—which is later than Luke and apparently based upon it) is this model used as a comment on God's love for sinners.

114. See Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 604-605 (citing Danker), who refers to a letter written by a son to his mother, seeking forgiveness for past mistakes.

115. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1084. The attempt by Scholz (*Gleichnisaussage*, pp. 270-74) to find structural and thematic links between 15.11-24 and the two creation accounts of Gen. 1.1–2.4a; 2.4b–3.24 fails to convince.

116. Aus, 'Luke 15:11-32', pp. 443-69. Ernst (*Lukas*, p. 456) also mentions the possibility of a Jewish *Vorlage*.

117. See Aus, *Weihnachtsgeschichte*, pp. 126-73, who finds fourteen common motifs with the Joseph tradition. The only two differences are that in Lk. 15.11-32 the younger son falls into sin, and the brothers are not reconciled within the story.

118. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 194-212. The motifs are: shepherd, lost sheep, repentance, restoration, female imagery, danger and survival, protection and comfort, holiness/honour, love, banquet, reversal, house, and theology/Christology.

119. Drury, *Parables*, p. 146. This is confirmed by the study of O. Hofius, 'Alttestamentliche Motive im Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn', *NTS* 24 (1977), pp. 240-48, who examines the motifs of return (cf. Hos. 2.9), confession (cf. Exod. 10.16), compassion of the father (cf. 2 Sam. 14.33), ring/robe (cf. Gen. 41.42), fat-

Rengstorf claims that the parable should be understood against the background of the Jewish *k'tsatsah*, a ceremony whereby a person was cut off from the community for breaking the rules of society (for instance, selling property to a Gentile). This process was reversible by another ceremony, indicated in our parable by the robe, ring and shoes.[120] However, it seems that Rengstorf extracts too much from the parable. The son is not cut off, he goes willingly. Nevertheless, Bailey is sympathetic to this proposal in part, pointing out that if the ceremony was not enacted when the son left, it does give some insight into how the community would have reacted when he returned.[121]

Another point of dispute is the precise legal background that informs the dividing of the inheritance. However, as not all considerations discussed in the literature ultimately affect the sense of the parable, only the main factors will be considered in the analysis below.[122] It also seems wise to heed Marshall's caution, that as Jesus was not a lawyer but a storyteller, we should not necessarily expect a parable to conform to legal propriety.

b. *Analysis (vv. 11-24)*

In this parable, the ἀνθρωπός τις is a father who has two sons. Both are introduced here, preparing the reader for the role that they will both play in the story. In the first instance, we are confronted with the younger of the two seeking his share[123] of the family estate.[124]

ted calf (cf. 1 Sam. 28.24), dead/lost (cf. Ps. 31.13), faithfulness to commands (cf. Deut. 26.13) and squandering money with prostitutes (cf. Prov. 29.3). Hofius concludes that the author of the parable of the Lost Son was saturated in the Hebrew scriptures, which in turn leads him to the opinion that the parable is an authentic creation of Jesus.

120. K.H. Rengstorf, *Die Re-investitur des verlorenen Sohnes in der Gleichniserzählung Jesu (Luk. 15,11-32)* (Cologne: Westdeutscher, 1967).

121. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 121-22.

122. For a discussion of the legal situation see Str–B, II, p. 212; III, pp. 545-53; Schottroff, 'Verlorenen Sohn', pp. 27-52; J.D.M. Derrett, 'Law in the NT: The Parable of the Prodigal Son', *NTS* 14 (1967), pp. 56-74; W. Pöhlmann, 'Die Abschichtung des verlorenen Sohnes (Lk 15,12f.) und die erzählte Welt der Parabel', *ZNW* 70 (1979), pp. 194-213.

123. τὸ ἐπιβάλλον μέρος is a technical formula, used in the papyri of the paternal inheritance. See Pöhlmann, *Haus*, pp. 204-205.

124. οὐσία (property/wealth) occurs only in Lk. 15.11, 13 in the NT (cf. Tob. 14.13; *3 Macc.* 3.28). Diogenes Laertius 9.35 tells of three brothers who divide the

According to Mosaic law, the first-born son had rights to a double share of the inheritance (Deut. 21.17; *m. B. Bat.* 7.4-5). Thus the younger son would receive a third. The property could be left via a will effective on the death of the father, or by a gift during his lifetime. In the latter case, any interest on the property was only payable after the death of the father.[125] Normally in this situation, if the son disposed of the property the buyer could not take possession of it until the death of the father (*m. B. Bat.* 8.7). With respect to our parable, the father seems to retain possession of the property (v. 31) and the family is supported by the income from the estate. Derrett suggests that the younger son would have received slightly less than a third, due to the ongoing costs of running the estate.[126]

In spite of the above provisions, Sir. 33.19-23 warns against the practice of allocating the inheritance while the father is still alive, tying it to the issue of the father's honour (cf. *b. B. Meṣ.* 75b). This raises the issue of whether such practice was widespread. On the one hand, it could be argued that the mere fact that Sirach warns against the procedure makes it obvious that it was relatively common. Consequently, nothing unusual is happening in the parable and the audience would not have been surprised.[127]

However, Bailey has advanced some quite weighty arguments, including a detailed Middle Eastern cultural analysis, to show that such a practice was irregular in the extreme. He contends that the Sirach text does not show that the procedure was common and needed reforming. Rather, it simply reflects the prevailing community attitude. Furthermore, the issue is the father distributing the inheritance, not the son asking for it. In effect, the younger son was wishing the father dead,[128]

οὐσία when one wishes to settle in a distant land (BAGD, p. 596).

125. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 128-29.

126. Derrett, 'Prodigal', p. 62. Derrett suggests two-ninths as a likely amount.

127. So W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of their Jewish Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. 183; Linnemann, *Parables*, pp. 74-75. Scott (*Hear*, p. 111) suggests that Sirach and the Mishnaic law were possibly reactions to the procedure depicted in this parable.

128. In v. 12b, βίος replaces οὐσία. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 119-20) shows how this is an appropriate word, reflecting the inseparable relationship between land and life in the Middle East. Scott (*Hear*, p. 111) observes the wordplay, whereby the division of the βίος 'kills' the father, by taking away his means of subsistence. Note also the ironical use of the term in the textual variant at Lk. 8.43. The woman with the haemorrhage had spent all her βίος (Mk 5.26 has τὰ παρ' αὐτῆς πάντα) but the

for the notion of passing on an inheritance while in good health is unthinkable. No Middle Eastern son ever asks for an inheritance, let alone is given it! Normally the father would explode with rage, for this is the ultimate insult. It is even more remarkable that the son was able to sell his share. Furthermore, the elder brother should have refused to accept his brother's request and intervened. His silence indicates his refusal to do so and demonstrates that his family relationships are less than adequate.[129]

The radical nature of the son's request is confirmed by Pöhlmann, who analyses the parable in terms of the Greek and Wisdom understanding of *house*. He shows that the father was not rich, nor was the farm a large estate, but rather one that provided basic support for the family. The son's request for the inheritance was, therefore, contrary to the basic ethos of the house. He thus plays the role of the rebellious fool in the Wisdom tradition.[130]

By asking for his share of the property while the father was still alive, the son is, in effect, saying that he is no longer able to live in the family house.[131] Nevertheless, the father accedes to his son's wishes, thereby granting him the freedom to choose his own destiny and live with the implications of his decision.

The audience, completely astounded at this point, are in for a further shock. The boy[132] converts the property into cash,[133] thereby ignoring any moral claim that his father had on the property. He has now clearly violated Jewish law by failing to honour his parents and to sustain them in their old age (cf. Mk 7.11-13).[134]

The lad then sets off for a distant land to seek pleasure and fulfilment.[135] Jeremias shows that there was nothing amiss with emigrating

doctors could not restore her to full life.

129. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 111-17, 122. See also Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 161-66.

130. Pöhlmann, *Haus*, pp. 183-87.

131. Derrett, 'Prodigal', p. 60.

132. Presumably unmarried, the son would be less than twenty years of age. See Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 129.

133. Based on evidence from the papyri (Plutarch, *Cato Min.* 6.7. See BAGD, p. 782), συνάγω can carry this sense. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 129; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 607; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 588.

134. Derrett, 'Prodigal', p. 64; Scott, *Hear*, p. 113.

135. Against Schmid (*Lukas*, p. 253), it is unlikely that the time interval μετ' οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας indicates a mark of courtesy, for nothing the boy has done to this

as such, for due to frequent famine in Palestine and more favourable living conditions elsewhere many Jews moved abroad.[136] Nevertheless, χώραν μακρὰν[137] is probably designed to stress the alienation of the son from his family. The boy then compounds his original sin by squandering[138] his money with reckless abandon.[139]

Predictably the money eventually runs out, with the problem compounded by the onset of severe famine. The boy begins to lack the necessities of life (ὑστερεῖσθαι). As he now has no family for support, he seeks employment with one of the local citizens.[140] Working for a Gentile was not viewed favourably by the Jews (cf. Acts 10.28), a fact mirrored by their low regard for tax-collectors (15.1). The son's desperation is further indicated by the job he accepts. To feed pigs, unclean animals, was degrading work for a Jew (Lev. 11.7; Deut. 14.8; 1 Macc. 1.47), a feeling endorsed by the rabbinic maxim, 'Cursed be the man who would breed swine, or teach his son Greek philosophy' (*b. B. Qam.* 82b).[141] Thus the young man would have been forced virtually to abandon his religious customs (such as keeping the sabbath).[142]

point has indicated any concern for decorum.

136. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 129. Jeremias estimates that in the first century CE, there were some half a million Jews in Palestine compared to four million in the diaspora.

137. Carlston ('Reminiscence', p. 370) claims that this is a Lukan phrase (cf. 19.12). However, as Scott (*Hear*, p. 113) points out, it is possibly authentic here and secondary in 19.12.

138. διασκορπίζω is literally *to scatter in all directions*. The word is also used of squandering property in 16.1, and forms one of several possible links between the two parables. See the discussion in n. 9 of the introduction to this chapter.

139. ἀσώτως points to unbridled extravagance and indulgence. The expression ζῶν ἀσώτως also appears in Josephus (*Ant.* 12.4.8), while the cognate noun is found in Prov. 28.7 relating to the shaming of one's parents.

140. κολλάομαι is used in 10.11 of dust clinging to the feet. J.A. Harrill ('The Indentured Labor of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:15)', *JBL* 115 [1996], pp. 714-17) discusses the labour in terms of the Hellenistic παραμονή contract, whereby the labourer was bound to do any duties the master requested for the specified time of the agreement.

141. Note also *m. B. Qam.* 7.7, 'None may rear swine anywhere.'

142. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 129. R. Hoppe ('Gleichnis und Situation: Zu den Gleichnissen vom guten Vater [Lk 15,11-32] und gütigen Hausherrn [Matt 20, 1-5]', *BZ* 28 [1984], pp. 4-5) argues that the parable in no way tries to indicate that the boy breaks with traditional Jewish life and practice. Hoppe is correct to the extent that this is not a main feature of the parable, but the depths to which the boy

So great was the lad's need that he went lower than feeding pigs: he wanted to eat[143] their food.[144] Obviously his food rations were meagre![145] Although some understand κεράτιον (v. 16) to signify the pod of the carob tree known as St John's Bread (*ceratonia silqua*), which was shaped like little horns and was sweet tasting, Bailey contends that the carob referred to here was another variety which was wild, thorny, bitter and devoid of nourishment. Such were eaten only by very poor folk.[146] ἐπεθύμει is best taken as a voluntive imperfect, expressing an unfulfilled desire.[147] Although it is possible that the boy could not cope psychologically with the prospect,[148] Bailey contends that the human stomach simply could not digest the coarse pulp that was fed to the pigs.[149] The object of the iterative imperfect ἐδίδου is not given, but probably should not be seen as the carob pods. He could have helped himself to these.[150] Rather, the fact that nobody gave him any food led him to desire pig rations.[151]

Through soliloquy, a common narrative device in the Lukan parables, the boy rethinks his situation, comes to his senses, and realizes that he was better off at home. There, even his father's hired helpers (μίσθιοι)

sinks are highlighted by such things as his attachment to a non-Jew and his engagement in an abhorrent occupation.

143. χορτασθῆναι. The weaker attested variant γεμίσαι τὴν κολίαν αὐτοῦ ἀπό (A Θ Ψ as well as Old Latin, Syriac and Bohairic versions) is cruder and may well be original. So Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 312; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 609; Scott, *Hear*, p. 114 n. 48.

144. Scott (*Hear*, p. 115) believes that the description of the young man's poverty in terms of food implicitly introduces the boy's mother into the parable, for nourishment is normally associated with maternal metaphors. More likely, however, the mention of his lack of food prepares for the contrast to the communal feast, centred around the killing of the fatted calf.

145. It is unnecessary to support Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 130), who asserts that the boy must have stolen whatever food he ate.

146. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant,* pp. 171-73.

147. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 129 n. 75.

148. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1088.

149. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 128-29.

150. Thus, against Morris (*Luke*, p. 242), it is not necessary to view the boy's status as lower than a pig. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 773) believes that the idea here is that he was too closely monitored to even steal the pods.

151. Ernst (*Lukas*, p. 458) considers that at this point the story is controlled by the reality undergirding it. The statement merely shows that people who remove themselves from God find no pity from others.

had an abundance of food. In contrast (ἐγὼ δὲ), he is slowly wasting away.[152] The force of the expression εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐλθὼν (v. 17) is disputed. Not all agree with Jeremias's proposal that it reflects an underlying Semitic phrase signifying repentance.[153] On the one hand, Evans and Petzke assert that repentance is a theme artificially imposed on the parable. They claim that there is no evidence that the younger son has rebelled against his father, and the father does not act on the basis of his son's repentance.[154] However, not only have we have already seen that the boy has wronged his father at several points in the story, he explicitly acknowledges his sin and repents (15.18, 20). On the other hand, a number of commentators, while conceding that the son has acted sinfully and speaks of repentance, insist that the boy is acting out of purely selfish motives. It is not repentance but hunger that drives him home.[155] Bailey, for instance, argues that if this is repentance, the parable conflicts with 15.4-10 where repentance is defined as the acceptance of being found. Indeed, there is no statement of remorse, just overwhelming hunger. Furthermore, the underlying Hebrew/Aramaic word is נפשׁ, which is informed by Ps. 23.3. There the psalmist is brought back to God; here the prodigal acts by himself (i.e. to save himself).[156]

In response to such suggestions, we need to understand that there is not necessarily a dichotomy between hunger and repentance. In this instance, it is the lad's hunger that stimulates repentance. Against Bailey, it is inappropriate to argue from the basis of a word that Jesus may have used, and then draw an extremely tenuous link to Psalm 23.[157] In fact, Bailey's argument seems controlled by theological presuppositions. The whole point is that there is a tension in the understanding of repentance represented in the three parables of Luke 15. In

152. Captured by the present tense ἀπόλλυμαι. The verb forms a link with the two preceding parables (15.4, 8).

153. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 130. See also Str–B, II, p. 215.

154. C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 590-91; Petzke, *Sondergut*, pp. 140-41.

155. Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 240; Hoppe, 'Gleichnis und Situation', pp. 4-5; Scott, *Hear*, p. 116. Ramsey ('Plots', pp. 39-41) supports this by arguing that 'the confession of sin is one step removed from the reliable candor of interior monologue'.

156. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 129-33.

157. Bailey must understand Ps. 23.3 in terms of repentance. This has already been discussed in my analysis of the parable of the Lost Sheep, above.

the first two parables, the sheep and the coin are simply found; they play no active role. Here, the son makes the initial move and is unconditionally accepted by his father. At one level, we may argue for the necessity of this variation forced upon the storyteller by the very nature of the sheep and coin compared to a human character. At a theological level, this is simply a reflection of the tension found throughout the Scriptures between divine sovereignty and human free will.[158]

The son now recognizes that the only way out of his dilemma is to return to his father and acknowledge his sin, thereby confirming the rabbinic proverb, 'When a son (in need in a strange land) goes barefoot, then he remembers the comfort of his father's house'.[159]

ἀναστὰς πορεύσομαι represents an underlying Aramaic phrase meaning *I will go at once*,[160] thereby expressing his arousal from lethargy and despair.[161] εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν is a reverential periphrasis,[162] reflecting a realization that he has not only wronged his father, but violated the fifth commandment (Deut. 5.16). It is important to stress that the boy's sin is not just his reckless living, but the original actions against his father in requesting his inheritance, selling it off, and leaving the family. His portion of the estate is now in the hands of foreigners.[163]

The prodigal is overcome with shame. He is not content to beg for forgiveness and seek restoration as a son. Possibly he realizes that this is not likely, as he has forgone all previous rights. Rather, he is prepared to take the status of a μίσθος.[164] Bailey notes that this is not as bad as it might seem. As a hired man he would be free and independent, and his social status would not be inferior to his father or brother.

158. This will be discussed further, below. In apparent contradiction to his statements above, Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 138-41) later states that Jesus' audience would have understood the prodigal's actions as repentance.

159. Str–B, II, p. 216.

160. אקום ואצל. See Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 130.

161. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 374.

162. Not in the sense of sins piling up to heaven as in Ezra 9.6. It is a recognition that all sin is ultimately against God (Ps. 51.4).

163. Scott, *Hear*, p. 116.

164. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 136-37) sees in the term a more technical sense of *tradesman/craftsman*. He concludes that the boy intends to ask his father to finance his training as a craftsman so that he can repay his debt and regain his former position. However, this conjecture is unwarranted given the details provided.

Moreover, he can avoid a problem relationship with his brother and eventually repay his father.[165]

So he carries out his resolution. However, it almost appears as though the father is waiting for him. He sees his son at a distance[166] and, not content to wait passively, he runs to meet him, embracing him warmly. Again the audience is astounded with this unexpected development, for to run was humiliating for an Oriental nobleman. Such action would immediately draw a crowd.[167] The father was, therefore, prepared to violate custom to reconcile and welcome home his lost son.

The two verbs ἐσπλαγχνίσθη and κατεφίλησεν give insight into the character of the father. The former reflects his compassionate heart, a compassion which precedes his son's confession.[168] The latter signifies his forgiveness (cf. Gen. 33.4; 2 Sam. 14.33), with the preposition compound indicating either repeated kissing[169] or tender kissing.[170] This

165. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 176-78. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 133-35) is surely incorrect in attempting to find a sense of *not at the present time* for οὐκέτι (v. 19). In line with his previous comments about the selfish motives of the son, he contends that this selfishness continues here, for he is only interested in paying back what he owes so he can be restored to his former position. However, in Rom. 7.17, 20; 11.6a; 14.15 and Gal. 3.18, the other NT examples of οὐκέτι used not temporally but logically (listed by BAGD, p. 592—whom Bailey cites for support), the word is used as part of the apodosis of a first class conditional sentence. But the sense is still *no longer* (i.e. *not any more*), where the contrast is between one situation and another. If the former situation applies, the latter no longer applies. This is entirely different to the nuance proposed by Bailey. In Lk. 15.19 no conditional situation is proposed by which the logical force would be apparent. Bailey's assertion, that the word reverts to its usual temporal force in v. 21, is without foundation. There is simply no valid reason to distinguish between the two uses of οὐκέτι, unless of course one has prejudged the text. We might also question whether the underlying Aramaic word was capable of the same subtleties suggested by Bailey.

166. Bailey (*Lost*, p. 149) finds in μακρὰν (v. 20) a symbolic sense that the boy is still alienated. This is unlikely.

167. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 142-46. Bailey notes the reluctance in the Arabic versions to let the father run. Note also Sir. 19.30, 'A man's manner of walking shows what he is'.

168. Breech (*Silence of Jesus*, pp. 185-86) sees this word as a Lukan creation. He argues that, in a similar way to 10.33 (the Good Samaritan), the word places a value judgment on the character's actions, a judgment that is lacking in Jesus' core parables. But not only is this a severe case of circular reasoning, compassion is not a distinctively Lukan motif (cf. Mk 1.41; 6.34; 8.2; 9.22).

169. So Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 183.

170. So Scott, *Hear*, p. 117, who sees here another hint of the maternal theme.

unmerited forgiveness is the opposite of what is expected.[171] Rather, we would anticipate the son falling to the ground and kissing his father's feet.[172]

Bailey notes the implications of the father meeting his son in this way. As discussed previously, upon his return the boy would be open to hostility from the entire village. Here, reconciliation takes place on the outskirts of town and the son enters the protective custody of the father's acceptance. Thus, rather than the son having to run the gauntlet, the father runs it for him.[173]

In the confession to his father (v. 21), the boy does not follow his rehearsed speech precisely, omitting the request to be treated as a μίσθος.[174] The reason for this is not that his father interrupted him or that it was not the right moment,[175] but that in response to his father's loving acceptance he changed his mind. Not only was the original intention redundant, to propose it would insult his father's love.[176]

The father, however, sends his servants scurrying in all directions, with ταχὺ indicating that no time was to be wasted. They were to bring the best robe, a ring and shoes for his son. Rengstorf considers that στολὴν τὴν πρώτην refers to the son's former robe, which had been stripped off as part of the *k'tsatsah* ceremony. The idea here is one of reinstatement.[177] However, if this was the case we might have expected the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ.[178] Bailey's suggestion that this may be the father's robe is possible,[179] but it is doubtful that we should find

171. The unmerited forgiveness shown here contrasts with the situation of the prodigal son encountered in Buddhist writings, who must prove himself before he can enjoy the estate once more (cited by Derrett, 'Prodigal', p. 67).

172. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 146.

173. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 142-51. Bailey finds here a demonstration of part of the meaning of the incarnation and atonement. This will be considered below.

174. The textual variant which attempts to assimilate this from v. 19 (ℵ B D) is almost certainly secondary.

175. As proposed by Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 200; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1089; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 610; Ramsey, 'Plots', pp. 35-36. Ernst (*Lukas*, p. 459) considers that nothing should be made of this. It is just an abbreviated report of the speech.

176. Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 221; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 785. Bailey (*Lost*, p. 152) considers that true repentance occurs here in response to the father's costly and visible love.

177. Rengstorf, *Re-investitur*, pp. 40-45.

178. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 610.

179. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 154.

eschatological suggestions present.[180] δακτύλιον could be a signet ring which conveyed authority (Est. 3.10; 8.8; 1 Macc. 6.15). ὑποδήματα were the mark of a freeman. The son had obviously returned barefoot, typifying the status of a slave.[181] With all this completed, the prodigal son's honour is now restored.[182]

The extravagant nature of the father's love continues. In addition to the above, the fatted calf was to be slaughtered. μόσχος was a young animal or calf, and its being fatted (σιτευτός) signifies an animal kept for a special occasion. Indeed, meat was only eaten at festive celebrations.[183] The killing of the fatted calf was, therefore, the height of hospitality.

εὐφρανθῶμεν points to a communal celebration,[184] a theme that connects each of the three parables of this chapter. The banquet serves as an opportunity to reconcile the boy to the entire village. In addition, the celebration and feasting imagery contrasts with the carob pods, and helps underline the extremities of lost–found, sin–repentance, and alienation–restoration.[185] Given the context of forgiveness/salvation, the imagery here may also carry echoes of the messianic banquet (cf. Lk. 13.28-29; 14.15-24).

ὅτι (v. 24) introduces the father's rationale for this celebration. His son was dead, but now is alive.[186] νεκρὸς could refer to being morally dead (cf. Eph. 2.1), the fact that he was thought to be dead, or that he

180. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 130) cites Isa. 61.10, which speaks of being clothed with the garments of salvation and the robes of righteousness. See also Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 185.

181. See *b. Pes.* 118a; *b. Šab.* 152a, for the indignity of going barefoot.

182. Nolland (*Luke*, pp. 785, 790) disagrees that the issue here is one of restoration of authority. The point is simply to contrast his present appearance (cf. C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 594). How Scott (*Hear*, p. 118) can criticize Jeremias for reducing the text to a theologoumenon by claiming that the son is forgiven and reinstated, then himself immediately interpret the father's actions as indicating his son's restoration, is quite bewildering.

183. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 786.

184. Bailey (*Lost*, p. 155) claims that it would require close to two hundred people to eat a fatted calf.

185. Via, *Parables*, p. 165.

186. Bailey (*Lost*, p. 156) is incorrect in claiming that the banquet is a celebration in honour of the father and his costly love. Both this verse and v. 27 indicate that the motivation is joy over the son's safe return.

was totally cut off from the family.[187] Bailey considers that it signifies that the son had previously been dead to his father's love,[188] while Borsch states, 'Physically and also psychologically and spiritually the young man had been in a life and death situation'.[189]

To state the matter from the perspective of the father, his son was lost and now is found. The perfect participle ἀπολωλὼς[190] indicates the complete state of lostness in the father's eyes, thus confirming the suitability of νεκρὸς. A seemingly irreversible situation had been reversed.

So the celebrations begin. The young man now finds the pleasure that he had sought in the far country.[191]

c. *Analysis (vv. 25-32)*

The parable now picks up the theme of the elder brother. This is not just a 'lame appendix',[192] for now the audience is given a voice. They have endorsed the view of sin and repentance initially presented, but have been completely staggered by the father's response. Their protests are expressed in the words of the elder brother.[193]

The scene shifts to the field, where the elder son is returning from his day's work. This image may evoke the picture of a son still at home, but distant from his father.[194] As he approaches the house he hears the festivities.[195] This puzzles him,[196] so he asks[197] one of the

187. Meynet, *Saint Luc*, II, p. 163. Rengstorf (*Re-investitur*, pp. 21-22) believes that it refers to the legal act of excommunication.

188. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 159-60.

189. Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 42.

190. The word may possibly be a Lukan addition to facilitate a further link to the two previous parables.

191. Morris, *Luke*, p. 243.

192. Against C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 588.

193. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 163.

194. Scott, *Hear*, p. 119.

195. συμφωνία could be a musical instrument (e.g. double pipe), but more likely a band of players or singers. See BAGD, 'συμφωνέω, συμφωνος', p. 781; O. Betz, 'συμφωνία, συμφώνησς', *TDNT*, IX, pp. 304-309. For some older studies on this word see P. Barry, 'On Luke xv.25, *symphonia*: Bagpipe', *JBL* 23 (1904), pp. 180-90; G.F. Moore, '*Symphonia* not a Bagpipe', *JBL* 24 (1905), pp. 166-175. χορός indicates a choral dance (BAGD, 'συμφωνέω, συμφωνος', p. 883).

196. τί ἄν εἴη ταῦτα (v. 26). The use of the optative is typically Lukan (cf. 18.36; Acts 21.33) and expresses complete uncertainty.

197. The imperfect ἐπυνθάνετο could be either inceptive or descriptive. If the latter, it pictures an interrogation. He wanted all the details!

servants[198] what was happening.

The fact that the servant is made to repeat what the audience already knows serves to emphasize further the father's extravagant actions.[199] The elder son responds to the news with anger, with the imperfect ἤθελεν capturing his persistent refusal to enter and join the celebrations. Verse 30 would indicate the unlikelihood that his anger is due to a fear that the property may be redivided. However, he may resent the fact that his brother can be supported once again by the family estate.[200] More likely, he is indignant about the quick forgiveness offered to his brother, feeling that this is entirely unjustified after his initial actions.[201]

The father again acts contrary to all expectations. Bailey observes that in this situation a Middle Eastern father would lock the son up, finish the banquet, then have him beaten.[202] However, instead of rebuking his son he pleads with him to come inside. The imperfect παρεκάλει corresponds to ἤθελεν. The son's persistent refusal is met with the father's persistent pleas.

This, in turn, causes the elder brother to release his harboured frustrations. He sees himself as the model son, serving his father obediently. The use of δουλεύω is probably significant, indicating that he really did not understand what a father–son relationship was meant to be.[203] In fact, both sons wrongly believed that the key to acceptance by their father was to act as a servant.[204]

His list of grievances continues, now reminding his father that he has never violated his command. The audience cannot miss the irony here. He has just shamed his father by refusing to enter the celebration!

Recalling the attitude of the labourers in the vineyard who complained about the generosity shown to others (Mt. 20.11-12), the elder son considers that he has not received just treatment. He has not even

198. παῖς may be *boy* rather than *servant*, for he replies with *your father* instead of *my master*.

199. Scott, *Hear*, p. 119.

200. Derrett, 'Prodigal', p. 67; Scott, *Hear*, p. 120.

201. Stein, *Parables*, p. 122.

202. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 172.

203. Not all accept this interpretation. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 787) believes δουλεύω is used purely as a contrast to the younger son's errant ways. See also Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 79, who insists that the elder son does not murmur about being a slave. Nevertheless, while he does not complain about it, it still represents his whole outlook.

204. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 157.

been given a kid or a goat, let alone a more expensive calf, so that he could celebrate with his friends. It is significant that here the elder son is demonstrating the same desire as his brother—to celebrate apart from his family.[205]

The insult now shifts to his brother, whom he describes in the derogatory phrase ὁ υἱός σου οὗτος (v. 30; cf. 15.2; 18.11; Acts 17.18). He cannot even bring himself to call the prodigal his brother. His only concern is with the squandered property. His brother simply does not deserve the fatted calf.

In the end, therefore, we are confronted with an elder son who is also estranged from his father.[206] He has insulted him, not only by refusing to enter the feast, but by addressing him without a title. This insult is even worse than that given by the younger son, for this is public. He has the spirit of a slave. He is self-righteous and he expects to be paid for his services. His friends are not part of his family; emotionally his community is elsewhere.[207] Furthermore, he has attempted to vilify his father's love for the younger son by insisting that the boy squandered the money μετὰ πορνῶν. This is pure conjecture.[208]

Unbelievably, the father does not rebuke his son. Instead he displays the same tenderness shown to the younger son, soothing him by using the affectionate term τέκνον.[209] He reaffirms that the former property settlement still stands: the elder son will inherit the farm.[210]

205. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 378.

206. As Schweizer (*Lukas*, p. 165) states, 'Mit dessen unbegreiflichem Handeln (vom Vater) hat der ältere Sohn so wenig zu schaffen wie mit dem verwerflichen des Bruders'. L. Ramaroson ('Le coeur du Troisième Evangile', *Bib* 60 [1979], p. 355) believes that the parable conveys the idea that distance from the father equals misery, whereas proximity leads to happiness. However, this does not agree with the situation of the elder son, for though he was in physical proximity to his father, he was estranged in heart.

207. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 171-72, 182; Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 156; Scott, *Hear*, p. 120.

208. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 122-24) notes that in the Eastern versions (apart from the Old Syriac) and commentaries, no thought of immorality is conveyed. Possibly the elder son was trying to depict his younger brother as fulfilling the conditions of a rebellious son (Deut. 21.18-21), for which the punishment was death.

209. When used in the vocative τέκνον has this sense. See BAGD, p. 808. Scott (*Hear*, p. 122) finds another female metaphor here. However, it is hardly the case that the man is a failure as a father but a success as a mother, as Scott claims.

210. πάντα τὰ ἐμὰ σά ἐστιν. See Marshall, *Luke*, p. 613; Bailey, *Lost*, p. 184. L.T. Johnson (*The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke–Acts* [SBLDS, 39;

It is at this point that the story deviates from the standard Jewish tale of the elder and younger sons, where the younger is the object of favour.[211] The father's actions demonstrate his equal love for both sons. The fatted calf was not killed because the prodigal was the younger son, but because he had returned.

Nevertheless, the father does not retreat from his choice to celebrate. In fact, ἔδει stresses his determination to do so. It is not clear whether we should understand ἡμᾶς[212] or σέ[213] with ἔδει. However, although the tone is different, the end result is the same. The father is not only justifying the feast, but exhorting his son to join it.[214]

Although the father has let many angry words pass him by, there is something he must correct.[215] With the phrase ὁ ἀδελφός σου οὗτος (v. 32) the father emphasizes the relationship which the elder brother had chosen to ignore (v. 30).[216] The prodigal might well be the father's son, but he is still the elder son's brother.

A final surprise confronts the audience. The story is left open-ended. Is the elder son going to join the feast? Or will he continue to live with his father as a slave? Thus the audience is drawn into the parable and forced to identify with each of the characters in turn. Will they, as prodigals, repent? Will they mirror the love and compassion of the father to other prodigals? Or will they adopt the spirit of the elder son, displaying a critical and self-righteous attitude to those who are, in many ways, no worse than themselves?

Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977], p. 161) believes that the underlying idea here may be that in the ideal community or family relationship everything is held in common. It is only when people are alienated that property is viewed in individualistic terms.

211. Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, David, and Solomon. See Scobel, 'Verlorenen Sohn', pp. 58-60. However, against Scott (*Hear*, p. 112), the younger brother is not always the rogue (Abel, Joseph, David, and Solomon). Note also that a recognition of this traditional motif argues for the original unity of 15.11-32.

212. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1091.

213. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 131, who feels that the tone is one of reproach.

214. Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 80.

215. Bailey, *Lost*, 188.

216. Note the identical construction in v. 30, with ἀδελφός replacing υἱός. This contrasts with v. 24, where οὗτος is in a different position. As T. Corlett ('This *Brother* of Yours', *ExpTim* 100 [1988], p. 216) observes, English translations should render v. 32 as *this brother of yours*.

d. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Lost Son is certainly more than a portrayal of the complexities of human relationships.[217] Its extravagant features beg for referents.[218] Without doubt the primary focus of the story is upon the extraordinary nature of God's pardoning love and acceptance.[219] This is represented by the atypical actions of the father, who, by his initiative and patience, thwarts the misguided resolution of both sons.[220] Throughout his Gospel, Luke consistently represents this love as directed to the outcast and the marginalized (for instance, 1.52-53; 4.18; 14.15-24; 19.1-10). Here the focus is slightly different, though it is true that having asked for, and sold, his share of the property, the prodigal son was a social outcast of sorts. The main focus, however, is the attitude of God to sinners. In the father's refusal to override his son's desires, we glimpse a God who graciously leaves us to our choices. Nevertheless, he waits patiently and will always welcome home the penitent sinner. As Hoppe remarks, it is not that God behaves like this

217. As maintained by Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, pp. 184-212. He insists that: 1) the younger son is motivated by greed throughout; 2) the father is insecure, favours his younger son and constantly tries to justify himself; and 3) it is the elder son who reflects a maturity in his relationships, for he is concerned not for himself, but about the effects of his brother's return on his father. However, this is not only a highly suspect reading of the parable, it reduces Jesus to a teacher of vague moral truths. See also the attempts to relate the parable to modern psychoanalytical study by Tolbert, 'Prodigal Son', pp. 1-19, and Via, 'Prodigal Son', pp. 21-43. Against R. Couffignal ('Un père au coeur d'or: Approches nouvelles de Luc 15,11-32', *RevThom* 91 [1991], p. 111), the general lesson of the parable is not that it is necessary to lose oneself in order to find oneself.

218. Against G.V. Jones (*Art and Truth*, p. 169), who claims that because the name of God is not mentioned, it is possible to understand the parable humanistically.

219. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 128) titles the parable *The Father's Love*, while Pesch ('Zur Exegese', pp. 179-89) describes it as 'exegesis of God', a language event in which God comes to speech. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, pp. 589-90) fails to appreciate the deplorable nature of the son's actions and the father's subsequent welcome, when he states that the father's love must be read into his joy.

220. Although, admittedly, we are not privy to the final outcome with the elder son. K.W. Niebuhr ('Kommunikationsebenen im Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn', *TLZ* 116 [1991], p. 486) shows how the character of the father is accentuated by the audience's knowledge of the intentions of both sons before they confront their father.

in certain instances: rather, it is fundamental to his character and his reality.[221] We are reminded of the words of Ps. 103.13:

> As a father has compassion for his children,
> so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

A further picture of God that emerges from the parable is one in which his desire for intimate relationship transcends a mere master–servant association. Though God's children are also his servants (cf. Lk. 17.7-10), they are foremost his children (cf. Gal. 4.4-7).[222]

This desire for relationship also breaks the traditional categories of law. As the father's love for his son was not constrained by the necessity of adhering to a system of reprisals for breaking law and custom, so the love of God transcends human law and establishes its own.[223]

The parable also stresses the impartiality of God. Both sons are respected and treated with equal love and patience. God thus deals with all people equally. No particular group is rejected or favoured; the kingdom is universal. Seen in these terms, the parable subverts the popular mytheme of the favoured younger son.[224]

At this point, we are obliged to discuss the theme of repentance, which is more explicit here than in the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin. A further difference is that unlike the shepherd and the housewife, the father does not seek. He waits.

Although, as we have seen, some have denied that repentance is a legitimate motif to draw from the parable,[225] it is clear that the prodigal

221. Hoppe, 'Gleichnis und Situation', p. 10.

222. Bailey (*Lost*, pp. 140-41) notes the same tension in the Old Testament (Isa. 44.1; cf. Hos. 1.10) and in the rabbinic literature between Israel as God's servant and God's son.

223. Pöhlmann, *Haus*, pp. 211-13.

224. The favoured younger son theme also appears in the New Testament in Rom. 9.7, 12 and Gal. 4.21-31, where Paul shows that the promise comes through the younger son. See Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 118-19. Against Donahue (*Gospel in Parable*, p. 159), and in agreement with M.C. Parsons ('The Prodigal's Elder Brother: The History and Ethics of Reading Luke 15:25-32', *PRS* 23 [1996], pp. 147-74), the parable of the Lost Son does not stress favour shown to the younger son above the elder son.

225. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, pp. 590-91) believes that the parable reflects a situation of extremes—a change from misery to joy. The father's joy is simply over the son's return. He comments, 'The point of the parable would then seem to be, not the penitence and conversion of the sinner as such,...but the miraculous fact that these do occur, and that they are equivalent to life from the dead'. However,

sins, acknowledges his sin, accepts responsibility, and seeks forgiveness. At the outset, the seriousness of sin is underlined. The boy demands his inheritance, insults his father and family, then loses the money to Gentiles. In addition, the imagery of *the far country*, *feeding pigs*, *lost* and *dead*, all serves to highlight the alienation that results from his sin.[226]

Likewise, we should dismiss the view that the prodigal does not repent until he is confronted by his father's love. Such a view then leads onto the erroneous assumption that the parable illustrates the idea that God must make the initial move to stimulate repentance.[227] Rather, it is the boy who comes to his senses and makes the initial move. Granted, his idea of repentance is bound up with law, and he does not count on the radical forgiveness offered by his father. In this sense, Jesus redefines the prevailing view of repentance, which considered that penitence needed to be demonstrated tangibly in order to be effective.[228] Here, in contrast, the father places no strict demands on his son. He is accepted simply because he has returned. Nevertheless, there is a prerequisite involved. The boy must return. To say that repentance is not a prerequisite, but that God accepts all who return, is a contradiction in terms. In what sense can one come home to God and not repent? Following Bailey's line of reasoning, God accepts those who are not truly repentant, but act out of purely selfish motives. Not only is this artificially imposed on the parable, it contradicts the entire biblical revelation. Indeed, as stated above, the three parables of Luke 15 splendidly capture the biblical tension between divine sovereignty and human free will.[229]

That the parable makes no explicit mention of the atonement is not a problem. The purpose of the story is not to give a 'compendium of all Christian theology',[230] but to highlight one or two aspects of God's relationship to the world. Nevertheless, Bailey finds reference to the

Evans appears to be attempting to draw an artificial distinction, in this instance, between what the parable describes and what it teaches.

226. Pesch, 'Zur Exegese', p. 161; D. Wenham, *Parables*, p. 110; Bailey, *Lost*, p. 127.

227. So Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 165; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 262; Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 129-33.

228. As discussed by P. Fiedler, *Jesus und die Sünder* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1976), p. 228. See further, Chapter 15, Sections 2b and 2c below.

229. Compare Jn 5.40 with Jn 6.44, and Jer. 8.22 with Mal. 3.7.

230. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1086, quoting Manson, *Sayings*, p. 286.

atonement in the costly and unexpected love shown by the father. He comes out of the house to meet the boy (incarnation), risking public humiliation and scandal to demonstrate his love (cross/suffering servant motif).[231] In a similar vein, Crawford finds the atonement represented in the father's anguish over the son, and the elder brother's representation of the Pharisees who were responsible for Jesus' death.[232] The latter point is dubious, although the other images may have aroused impressions of the atonement for Luke's readers. In the original setting, however, the father's costly love certainly mirrors Jesus' willingness to associate with sinners and suffer reproach from the religious authorities for doing so.

This raises the issue of Christology, for the parable is certainly an implicit christological statement and a declaration of authority.[233] It is not a depiction of the love of God in general, but of God's love coming to concrete expression in Jesus.[234] Seen in its literary context (15.1-2), this parable serves, as do the previous two parables, to provide a justification for Jesus' ministry to outcasts and sinners. It is he who, by the very actions he is being reproached for, demonstrates the compassion, patient love, and unconditional acceptance of God for the lost.

Although the polemical tone is diminished somewhat if the literary context is regarded as secondary, the parable is still a 'veiled assertion of authority'.[235] It signifies that God's saving reign is now operative in the words and actions of Jesus. Furthermore, the theme of communal celebration that unites all the parables of Luke 15 has messianic undertones. The parable is thus a commentary on the unfolding of the eschatological reign of God in the ministry of Jesus. For Luke's readers, the christological dimension of the parable is more explicit, for they recognize that without the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the truth that this parable conveys would not be possible.[236]

The parable of the Lost Son is also a stark portrayal of the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees, who are clearly represented in the character of the elder son.[237] Two pictures emerge. First, as we have seen, the

231. Bailey, *Lost*, pp. 148-51, 174, 191.
232. R.G. Crawford, 'The Parable of the Atonement', *EvQ* 50 (1978), pp. 2-7.
233. See Pesch, 'Zur Exegese', pp. 185-87.
234. Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 261; Meynet, *Saint Luc*, II, p. 165.
235. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 132.
236. Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 167.
237. B.E. Beck (*Christian Character in the Gospel of Luke* [London: Epworth,

elder son is not in a perfect relationship with his father. Nevertheless, his loyalty and sincerity are not disputed. Similarly, the religious authorities, themselves not 'lost' in the strict sense, have misunderstood the nature and character of their God. Strict observance of the law is not the only way to love and acceptance.

Second, the elder son is not in a perfect relationship with his brother. In fact, his father has to re-stress the relationship which the elder boy denied. Similarly, the Pharisees and scribes had forgotten their relationship to their fellow Israelites, refusing to accept them as brothers. Technically they did not deny such people the right of repentance. However, they refused to associate with them and refused to acknowledge their right to belong to the people of God until such time as repentance was confirmed in a tangible way (i.e. strict observance of the law).[238] Consequently, their self-righteous attitude prevented them from experiencing the joy that God experiences over the lost-now-found.[239]

Some commentators dispute the association of the Pharisees with the elder son as unwarranted allegory. This association is generally challenged at two points. First, such a negative depiction of the Pharisees is simply incorrect.[240] Second, assuming it is correct, the elder son is not an appropriate symbol. His objections to his father are not dismissed but acknowledged, he is always with the father and inherits all, and the father's gentle words could not be directed to the self-righteous.[241]

In response, it is evident that to some extent the resolution of the second objection cancels out the first. The scribes and Pharisees are not, in fact, represented in an entirely negative light. They do have a relationship to the father, and they are devoted and sincere. Nevertheless,

1989], pp. 127-69) discusses what he terms 'the Pharisaic mind' as a mindset detrimental to following God. The Pharisees' attitude to wealth, pride, elitism, hypocrisy, and misplaced devotion to the law typify most of the characteristics that Jesus teaches against and which Luke's readers must avoid. As such, the Pharisees are central in Luke's mind and provide structure for much of the Gospel.

238. Carlston, 'Reminiscence', p. 389. See further, Chapter 15, Sections 2b and 2c, below.

239. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 780) points out that although there is no mention of heavenly joy in this parable, 15.10 paves the way for the reader to link the father's joy to divine joy.

240. See Schottroff, 'Verlorenen Sohn', pp. 49-51.

241. Scott, *Hear*, p. 105; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 592.

all is not well with their outlook. They have shortcomings that Jesus wishes to address.[242]

It is important to note that Jesus, in addressing the faults of the scribes and Pharisees, does not attack them. The way he constructs the parable echoes the grace of the father in the parable. His aim is not to rebuke, but to win over.[243] As Hunter states, 'if it is polemic, it is polemic at its finest, polemic armed with the gentleness of love'.[244]

It is also irrelevant to argue over whether or not the Pharisees and scribes would have identified themselves with the elder son.[245] Jesus is forcing his audience to examine themselves, challenging their views of God and their fellow Israelites. Thus, while they might not want to identify with the elder son, Jesus wants them to do so. Dupont comments, 'The terms by which the elder son describes his conduct are so precise that they permit without difficulty the identification of those with whom Jesus converses... One could not describe in a more exact way the religious ideal of the scribes and Pharisees'.[246]

Perhaps a qualification is needed at this point. It is not as though there is a definitive, one-to-one correspondence between the religious authorities and the elder son. Jesus is depicting a type of person or an attitude. This attitude is typified in the spirit of the Pharisees, and certainly fits with other depictions that Luke's Jesus gives of them (cf. 14.1-6; 18.9-14). In fact, we can readily picture the elder son saying

242. J.A. Darr (*On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke–Acts* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992], p. 110) points out that in 15.4-10 the Pharisees are encouraged to identify with the *ninety-nine who have no need of repentance*, thereby facilitating an identification with the elder son in the final parable. In so doing, Jesus traps them into self-evaluation.

243. L. Goppelt (*Theology of the New Testament* [ed. J. Roloff; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981], I, p. 136) correctly notes that the Pharisees are also called upon to repent, a repentance that involved a sharing of joy. In many ways this was a more difficult repentance, for they had to discard thoughts of self-righteousness and superiority.

244. Hunter, *Interpreting*, p. 61.

245. As does Schottroff, 'Verlorenen Sohn', pp. 49-51.

246. 'Les termes par lesquels le fils aîné décrit sa conduite sont si précis qu'ils permettent d'identifier sans peine les interlocuteurs de Jésus... On ne saurait décrire de façon plus exate l'idéal religieux des scribes et des Pharisiens' (Dupont, *Béatitudes*, II, p. 239). See also J.V. Kozar, 'Absent Joy: An Investigation of the Narrative Pattern of Repetition and Variation in the Parables of Luke 15', *TJT* 8 (1992), pp. 86, 91-92.

about his father, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them'.[247] Nevertheless, the story is not a complete allegory. Bailey notes that, in its final setting, the parable is addressed to every religious community, for all have their insiders and outsiders.[248]

A subsidiary theme that emerges from the parable is the proper use of wealth and possessions. Though not developed significantly here, it forms part of an important emphasis of the Third Gospel and is a significant factor running through many of the Lukan parables. This theme will re-emerge more fully in the parables of the Dishonest Manager and the Rich Man and Lazarus in the following chapter.

Some have suggested that Luke found in the parable an application relevant for a mixed Jewish/Gentile church.[249] While this is possible, the fact that the elder son is not rejected makes it difficult to detect a comment about the rejection of unbelieving Israel.[250]

247. Morris, *Luke*, p. 243.

248. Bailey, *Lost*, p. 181. Lambrecht (*Astonished*, p. 52) finds a special emphasis on rigorism versus those struggling with sin.

249. G. Braumann, 'Tot-lebendig, verloren-gefunden (Lk 15,24 und 32)', in W. Haubeck and M. Bachmann (eds.), *Wort in der Zeit: Neutestamentliche Studien* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964), pp. 156-64; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 592. The identity of Luke's readers will be discussed in Chapter 16, below.

250. Both Drury (*Parables*, pp. 143-47) and Scott (*Hear*, p. 124) believe that it is natural that the early church saw in the parable a description of its own relationship to Judaism. Thus the church identifie d itself with the younger son, while the faithless elder son typified unbelieving Israel. If this was the case, despite the problems inherent in associating Israel with the elder son, the church has ironically come dangerously close to emulating the attitude of the elder son!

Chapter 9

THE DISHONEST MANAGER (16.1-13)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Dishonest Manager is undoubtedly the most difficult of the synoptic parables.[1] It presents an intricate maze of problems for the interpreter, the most notorious being that Jesus seems to advocate a certain behaviour based on a dishonest model.[2] Other interpretive cruxes concern the setting of the parable, the limits of the original story of Jesus, the behaviour of the manager in vv. 5-7, and the precise meaning of the enigmatic statements of vv. 8b-9. In fact, the parable is so difficult that its authenticity (at least that of vv. 1-8a) is beyond doubt.[3]

As might be expected, this parable has been the subject of an enormous amount of literature. Apart from the expositions given in general books on the parables, Kissinger lists 137 works in his bibliography (up to 1977),[4] while Ireland surveyed 140 interpreters in his PhD dissertation.[5] For the most part I shall confine my study to a selection of books and articles written in the past thirty years, though at times reference will be made to older studies on which the more recent views are based.

1. Bultmann (*History*, pp. 199-200) feels that the original meaning is irrecoverable.

2. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 105) notes that this is not a problem for Eastern readers who are used to the dishonest man as a hero.

3. Drury (*Parables*, p. 149) and Goulder (*Luke*, pp. 618-27) are almost lone voices in regarding it as a Lukan creation.

4. Kissinger, *Parables*, pp. 398-408.

5. Now published as D.J. Ireland, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God: An Historical, Exegetical and Contextual Study of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16:1-13* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992). This work is the most complete treatment of the parable available in English, while the most comprehensive German work is M. Krämer, *Das Rätsel der Parabel vom Ungerechten Verwalter* (Zürich: PAS, 1972). Ireland (*Stewardship*, pp. 5-47) and Krämer (*Das Rätsel*, pp. 15-28) provide a history of interpretation of the parable.

Our parable follows the parables of the Lost in Luke 15. Although 16.1 indicates a change of audience to the disciples (15.3 indicates that the primary target of ch. 15 was the Pharisees), many have noted that Luke's use of ἔλεγεν...καὶ expresses continuity with the preceding (cf. 12.54; 14.12).[6] Clearly, Luke wants us to understand that the Pharisees heard the parable as well (16.14).[7]

A number of common motifs are evident between the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Dishonest Manager. Both characters face life-threatening situations occasioned by the squandering (διασκορπίζω[8]) of possessions, situations which are solved at the literary level by the device of soliloquy. Their motivation is self-serving and both receive a surprising response from the ἀνθρωπός τις who is introduced at the start of the parable. Both parables are also open-ended.[9]

Chapter 16 is bounded by two major Lukan parables which are in turn separated by some appended sayings from L and Q. Byrne argues for a literary unity of ch. 16 centring on v. 16. He understands the verb βιάζεται to indicate the overcoming of one's own selfish inclinations by a forceful choice to renounce wealth. 16.1-8a is a positive example of this, whereas 16.19-31 (the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus) is a negative example.[10] Hendrickx, on the other hand, argues for a similar literary unity around v. 14—a criticism of the love of money.[11]

It is clear, whether or not we accept the above suggestions, that in its present context, especially given the focus elsewhere in the Travel Narrative (12.13-34; 18.18-30; 19.1-10), the theme that binds this chapter together is the use of wealth and possessions.[12]

6. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 170; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 617.

7. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, p. 595) raises the possibility that Luke refers to both audiences as he was unsure of the intended direction of the parable.

8. The preposition compound indicates a scattering in all directions. The verb appears only in Lk. 15.13 and 16.1 in the New Testament.

9. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, pp. 167-68. See Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 109, for a similar comparison.

10. B. Byrne, 'Forceful Stewardship and Neglected Wealth: A Contemporary Reading of Luke 16', *Pacifica* 1 (1988), pp. 1-5. However, it is a moot point as to whether the manager actually renounced wealth.

11. Hendrickx, *Parables*, pp. 171-72.

12. See Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 116-216. After a detailed examination of both the literary and theological contexts for the parable, Ireland concludes that it must be understood in terms of charity to the poor, which, in turn, is governed by a proper attitude to material possessions.

While many have suggested that Jesus composed this parable in light of an actual incident, it is possible that he was inspired by the oracle of Isa. 22.15-19 against Shebna the steward, who was thrust out of office because of his self-preoccupation. However, more relevant than the inspiration for the story is the background necessary to understand the parable. Proposals vary from the lending of money,[13] to the sale of merchandise,[14] to a land estate where rental is paid by tenant farmers according to the level of production.[15] Most interpreters favour one of the latter two options. In any case, the master seems to be the owner of a large estate (*latifundium*). Most likely he was an absentee landlord, whose daily business was managed by a trusted head-servant.[16]

Probably the most significant research into the setting of the parable has been undertaken by Derrett, who investigates the Palestinian laws and customs on agency and usury.[17] Derrett shows that the manager would have been a household slave or freeman (the latter having greater authority), chosen for loyalty and efficiency, who acted on behalf of the owner and was solely responsible for all transactions. He could make his own profit without authorization from the master and could also liquidate debts, with the master bound by his actions. The manager was not paid as such, but was compensated for his expenses. Derrett also points out that the manager could not be dealt with by the courts for defrauding his master; he could only be punished or dismissed.[18] If an agent was directed to act illegally by the owner, it was the agent who was legally answerable for the action. This was designed to prevent shady characters hiding behind a superior.

As payment of interest was forbidden by the Torah (Exod. 22.25; Lev. 25.36; Deut. 23.19) a contract could not state the principal and interest separately. However, it was reasoned by the Pharisees that this

13. Morris, *Luke*, pp. 245-46. J.D.M. Derrett, 'Fresh Light on St. Luke xvi: I. The Parable of the Unjust Steward', *NTS* 7 (1961), pp. 198-219.

14. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 618.

15. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 86-94. Bailey responds to Derrett's objection that the revenue of tenant farmers was payable to a head farmer at harvest time by arguing that the amounts were not actually paid in vv. 5-7, but were simply outstanding and re-written. Derrett ('Unjust Steward', pp. 213-14) finally concedes that it is irrelevant whether tenant farmers or buyers of merchandise are in view.

16. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1097-98.

17. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 198-219.

18. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', p. 202.

was designed only to stop exploitation, not business transactions. Thus a legal fiction was established, whereby it was considered lawful for a bill of debt to state principal and interest as a single amount owed.[19] The question then arises as to whether such usurious payments belonged to the manager as personal gain (thus elimination of interest was personal loss), or to the owner. Derrett regards it as a matter of perspective. According to God's law, as the master could not authorize usury, he was not entitled to it. According to secular law he was entitled to the full amount of the debt, though he could release it if he chose. While not all accept Derrett's findings,[20] his study has been influential in the forming of most modern interpretations.

2. *Analysis*

The parable is introduced with Luke's characteristic ἄνθρωπός τις, and as in several other Lukan parables the man is described as rich (12.16;

19. For examples of legal and illegal contracts, see Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 211-212. Note also Josephus's account of Herod Agrippa I borrowing money in such a way through an agent Marsyas in CE 33–34 (*Ant.* 18.6.3).

20. J.S. Kloppenborg ('The Dishonoured Master', *Bib* 70 [1989], pp. 479-86) contends that the reductions were not in line with current interest rates. Derrett's sources relate to a later period. Citing Palestinian and Egyptian sources, he shows that biblical injunctions on usury were not observed (as evidenced by Lk. 19.23) and openly stated the interest rate. Against Fitzmyer, Kloppenborg claims that first-century sources are unclear as to how an agent was paid. Consequently, we cannot assume that the debtors' original accounts reflected the agent's commission. He concludes that Jesus' hearers would not have discerned the scenario proposed by either Derrett or Fitzmyer. Parrott ('Dishonest Steward', p. 503) argues in a similar vein to Kloppenborg, stressing that Derrett relies too heavily on the Mishnah which was not codified until the third century CE, and which was the result of deliberation on, and development of, law in the preceding centuries. It is far from clear that this reflects the precise legal situation of first-century Palestine. S.E. Porter ('The Parable of the Unjust Steward [Luke 16.1-13]: Irony *is* the Key', in D.J.A. Clines *et al.* [eds.], *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* [Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990], p. 133) contends that given Derrett's study, our parable reflects a situation whereby the manager can defraud the debtors with the approval of his boss, but be dismissed for cheating his boss! Furthermore, how could the debtors be expected to welcome the manager into their homes on this basis? Ireland (*Stewardship*, pp. 81-82) claims (apart from the questions over first-century Palestinian customs regarding interest and commission) that Luke's Gentile readers simply lacked the necessary background to envisage the proposals offered by Derrett and Fitzmyer.

16.19). Bailey's contention that there are no ruthless landowners in the synoptic parables is uncharacteristically anachronistic,[21] for it fails to appreciate the realities of first-century Palestinian agrarian society, in which landowners were perpetuators of an unjust system of exploitation of tenant farmers and day labourers.[22]

οἰκονόμος[23] is an imprecise term which Luke has already used of a head steward or manager in 12.42. Here he is an estate manager acting as an agent for the owner.[24] We are informed that the owner has received charges against (διεβλήθη) this manager to the effect that he is squandering his possessions. It is unclear who filed these accusations, but in the story they are meant to be accepted as true.[25] In fact, many see the manager's silence as an implicit admission of his guilt. The nature of the manager's wasteful behaviour is also unclear,[26] though the present participle διασκορπίζων and the preposition compound indicate

21. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 90.

22. See Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 198-219; J.A. Fitzmyer, 'The Story of the Dishonest Manager (Lk 16:1-13)', *TS* 25 (1964), pp. 32-33; B.B. Scott, 'A Master's Praise: Luke 16:1-8', *Bib* 64 (1983), pp. 173-88; Herzog, *Subversive Speech*, pp. 53-73; L.P. Trudinger, 'Exposing the Depths of Oppression (Luke 16:1b-8a): The Parable of the Unjust Steward', in V.G. Shillington (ed.), *Jesus and his Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), p. 131. Kloppenborg ('Dishonoured Master', pp. 486-93) examines the social codes evoked by the parable. He argues that as the master is rich he would be expected to behave in ways not altogether favourable to the peasant class. Furthermore, the crucial issue is not the wasting of his goods per se , but the damage to his social prestige which has been called into question by the alleged incompetence of his manager. Thus the manager is summarily sacked so as to preserve the master's honour.

23. See O. Michel, 'οἰκονόμος', *TDNT*, V, pp. 149-51.

24. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, pp. 99-102) has a discussion of the types of agent specified in the Mishnah.

25. Kloppenborg ('Dishonoured Master', pp. 487-88) insists that when διαβάλλω is allowed to carry its common force of *to bring charges with hostile intent*, it is then apparent that the charges against the manager are unsubstantiated. This, in turn, shows that the manager is sacked not because he is guilty, but purely to preserve the master's social honour. However, as the verb does not always have the above connotation, it would require other contextual factors in the parable to support Kloppenborg's contention. The simplest reading of the parable assumes that the manager is guilty. On διαβάλλω, see W. Foerster, *TDNT*, II, p. 71.

26. Some suggestions include: 1) not receiving enough profit (Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 110); 2) misappropriation of funds (Porter, 'Steward', p. 140); 3) inadequate records—hence he has to ask the debtors how much they owed (Parrott, 'Dishonest Steward', p. 504).

that we are not confronted with an isolated event.

The manager is then told to surrender the account books (ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον τῆς οἰκονομίας σου) for he is to be dismissed from his position (v. 2). This should not be construed as a mere drawing up of a statement of accounts, as if the manager has a second chance to correct them and clear his name,[27] but to prepare for the employment of another man.[28]

Porter argues that the use of the aorist ἀπόδος, together with the surrounding context, indicates that οὐ γὰρ δύνῃ ἔτι οἰκονομεῖν is instant dismissal, with the account books handed over immediately.[29] However, the context actually indicates the contrary. ἀφαιρεῖται (v. 3) hints at a process of removal, while the indefinite ἵνα ὅταν μεταστα θῶ indicates future removal. Bailey's suggestion that the manager is instantly dismissed, but has time to manoeuvre until he hands in the accounts, is persuasive.[30] Consequently, the actions of the manager in vv. 5-7 are not aimed at placating his master. He is acting purely for his own interests and is relying on the fact that the debtors do not know of his dismissal.

The manager arrives at an action plan by way of the common Lukan literary device of soliloquy (12.17; 15.17-19; 18.4-5).[31] He first of all rejects the possibility of manual labour as beyond the physical capacity of a person used to an administrative position,[32] and then begging as unacceptable to his sense of pride.[33]

At this point, we are not informed of the content of his plan, only its objective. He wants to provide a secure future for himself. δέξωνταί με εἰς τοὺς οἴκους αὐτῶν probably does not refer to hospitality or to the source of his next meal, as this is hardly a long-term solution (cf. Sir. 29.21-28, where the perpetual guest is intolerable).[34] Rather, he seems to be seeking new employment prospects, although this itself is prob-

27. Against P.S. Wilson, 'The Lost Parable of the Generous Landowner and other Texts for Imaginative Preaching', *QRevMin* 9.3 (1989), pp. 86-87.

28. So Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', p. 204; Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 97.

29. Porter, 'Steward', p. 141 n. 1.

30. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 97.

31. The aorist ἔγνων is probably best taken as dramatic, giving the sense 'I've got it!'

32 . Aristophanes (*Birds* 1432) shows that digging was also an abhorred task (τί γὰρ πάθω; σκάπτειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι).

33. Sir. 40.28 states that it is better to die than to beg.

34. Against Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, p. 106.

lematic given that oppressed tenant farmers would only be in a position to hire day labourers—a job our manager has already considered out of the question![35]

In vv. 5-7 we are confronted with one of the major interpretive cruxes of the parable. Exactly what does the manager do? Does he act honestly or dishonestly? In other words, is the title τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας (v. 8a) given as a result of the actions he performs now, or is it the result of the initial charges filed against him in v. 1? We will consider the options separately.

a) *The manager acted honestly*. Adherents of this view fall into two groups. The first group, which has greater support,[36] believes that the manager eliminates the usury on the debts. Derrett argues that first-century hearers would understand that the bill contained interest, as this was such a common practice in the ancient Near East. Moreover, he cites Indian sources to show that interest of 100 per cent was not unknown.[37]

A second group believes that the manager sacrifices his own commission. This view was apparently first proposed by Margaret Gibson,[38] but has since been supported and developed by Gächter,[39] and more recently, Fitzmyer.[40]

b) *The manager acted dishonestly*. The alternative proposal is that the manager falsified the accounts by reducing the actual amount owing.[41]

35. Donahue (*Gospel in Parable*, p. 164) also makes the quite reasonable point that no one is likely to employ a man they know has been dismissed for incompetence. Moreover, they would risk their relationship with the owner in so doing (cf. also Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', p. 204). In reply, we can only stress that this is a parable, not a logically constructed argument, where we simply have to accept the story at face value.

36. For instance, Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 198-219; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 619; Morris, *Luke*, pp. 245-46; Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 231.

37. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 213-16.

38. M. Gibson, 'On the Parable of the Unjust Steward', *ExpTim* 14 (1902–1903), p. 334.

39. P. Gächter, 'The Parable of the Dishonest Steward after Oriental Conceptions', *CBQ* 12 (1950), pp. 121-31.

40. Fitzmyer, 'Story', pp. 36-37. See also Ellis, *Luke*, pp. 200-201.

41. So J. Jeremias, *Rediscovering the Parables* (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 143; Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 86-100; Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, p. 108; Kloppenborg, 'Dishonoured Master', p. 490; Porter, 'Steward', pp. 131-32; Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 73-82.

Crossan, for instance, claims that the manager wants to create a 'Robin Hood' image. He merely continues the inefficiency that earned him the sack.[42]

In deciding between these two options, there appear to be four factors in favour of the latter. First, there are doubts as to the validity and relevance of the studies undertaken by Derrett and Fitzmyer for our parable.[43] Second, the use of the adverb ταχέως (v. 6) conveys an impression of haste, which would tend to indicate that something underhand is occurring. The manager has limited time to act, for the debtors must not know that he has been sacked. Nor does he want his master to learn of his actions.[44] Third, the designation *dishonest manager* (v. 8a) is hardly explicable if the manager's actions in vv. 5-7 are in fact honest.[45] Fourth, there is the question of who would employ a man who takes 100 per cent commission for himself!

Nevertheless, whatever option we take, it is crucial to bear in mind that the manager was not trying to placate his master, but to make friends with the debtors.

Much has been written about the size of the debts and the subsequent reductions.[46] Derrett explains the large amounts in terms of market factors.[47] However, it is probably merely another case of the extravagant language that is so common in Jesus' parables.

With v. 8a we come to another difficult problem for the interpreter. Does the parable proper end with v. 7, with the statement by the κύριος reflecting the words of Jesus,[48] or is it a statement by the master in the

42. Crossan, *In Parables*, pp. 106-108.

43. See the discussion in n. 20, above.

44. Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, p. 107; Porter, 'Steward', pp. 142-43. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, pp. 99-100) also emphasizes the personal pronoun '*my* master' (v. 5). It is imperative that they think he is still employed.

45. Discussed more fully below.

46. See Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 127; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 619; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1100-1101. Bailey (*Poet and Peasant*, p. 101) observes that both reductions amount to approximately 500 denarii.

47. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 212-16.

48. So E. Klostermann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HNT, 2.1; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1919), pp. 525-26; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 201; Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 333; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 464; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu,* p. 262 n. 99; Wiefel, *Lukas*, pp. 293-94; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 599. Most note a similar literary sequence between 16.1-13 and 18.1-8, where a parable about a disreputable character is followed by an assurance from Jesus, an eschatological interpretation beginning with *I tell you*,

parable?[49] Jeremias is perhaps the most ardent supporter of the former position. He contends that the master could not have praised the deceitful manager, for the manager has wronged him by falsifying the accounts. Moreover, κύριος is most often used in an absolute sense of Jesus in this Gospel (cf. 18.6).[50]

Most commentators (and modern versions) understand κύριος to refer to the master in the parable.[51] κύριος is used of the master in vv. 3 and 5, and would appear to be the most natural sense here. Furthermore, the word is used similarly of the master in 12.37, 42b; 14.23, and at a literary-structural level a statement by the master is required to close the narrative (i.e. call to account → response of the manager → response of the master).[52] Thus, while viewing Jesus as the speaker certainly makes the transition to v. 8b easier, it ultimately leaves the parable without an ending. Moreover, the shift to the first person in v. 9 is more convincing with this proposal than with attempts to explain it merely as a shift from indirect to direct speech. In any case, the master praising the manager is the equivalent of the storyteller (i.e. Jesus) praising the manager, though, of course, the converse is not necessarily true.

The most pressing point of the entire parable arises at this juncture. Why is the manager praised? It is clear that such praise is directed toward his actions described in vv. 5-7, not his original behaviour, and one's view of the reason for such praise will be determined to a large degree by how one understands these actions. Those who believe that the manager wiped illegal usury off the accounts view the master's

and an independent saying (or sayings). This, however, begs the question as to whether the two parables have to follow a common literary sequence. Bultmann (*History*, pp. 175, 199-200) believes that v. 8a is not from Jesus in any form, but has risen from the tradition or from the Evangelist. However, this verse is so difficult it would hardly have been added by the tradition.

49. Krämer (*Das Rätsel*, pp. 139-43) summarizes the arguments. The matter is, of course, complicated by Luke's tendency to use κύριος of the earthly Jesus (for instance, 7.13; 10.1; 11.39). See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 201-204, for a discussion of Luke's use of κύριος.

50. Jeremias, *Rediscovering*, pp. 34-35.

51. For instance, Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 163; Fitzmyer, 'Story', pp. 27-28; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 619-20; Porter, 'Steward', pp. 144-45; Scott, *Hear*, p. 260; Stein, *Parables*, p. 107; Via, *Parables*, p. 156.

52. Scott, *Hear*, p. 260; D.A. de Silva, 'The Parable of the Prudent Steward and its Lucan Context', *CrisTR* 6 (1993), p. 257.

praise as either grounded in his seeking a reputation for piety,[53] or due to the fact that the master was facing a potential crisis whereby his own illegal activity might be exposed.[54]

Those, on the other hand, who regard vv. 5-7 as an elimination of the manager's own commission understand the praise as either a commendation for honesty (the manager demonstrated a repentant attitude via a return to fair business dealings; not only is his attitude commendable in itself, it must also enhance further business[55]), or a ratification of the elimination of usury (which flowed to the manager as commission) as well as praise for prudence.[56]

A final group, who believe that vv. 5-7 represent a falsifying of accounts (whereby the owner is deprived of money rightfully his), normally understand the praise to be directed at the *cunning* of the manager.[57] Many commentators appeal to T.W. Manson's distinction between being commended for honesty and being commended for acting wisely.[58] In other words, the master admires his manager's astuteness, not his honesty. The latter is not the issue at stake. The manager needed to act quickly to secure a future for himself in the midst of a crisis, and act he did. Thus the concern is not so much with what he did, but with the fact that he did something. In this regard, it is

53. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', p. 217.

54. Morris, *Luke*, p. 246. Morris later concedes that the master may not have been aware of such illegal activity (p. 248).

55. Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 232; B.E. Beck, *Christian Character*, pp. 28-30; P.S. Wilson, 'Generous Landowner', pp. 87-88, who asserts that the master would not commend the manager for being unjust; otherwise, he has stepped outside of the story and has become a preacher with a moral message.

56. Fitzmyer, 'Story', pp. 36-37.

57. An exception is G. Schwarz, '"...lobte den betrügerischen Verwalter"? (Lukas 16,8a)', *BZ* 18 (1974), pp. 94-95. Schwarz believes that the manager acted dishonestly, but the Aramaic roots underlying the Greek words ἐπήνεσεν (ברך) and φρονίμως (ערים] have been wrongly translated in a positive sense, when in fact they can also be taken negatively (*cursed* and *deceitful* respectively). By way of response, the following points can be made: 1) despite the possibilities as to the original form, we ultimately need to deal with the parable in its present form; 2) this leaves vv. 10-12 as the main application of the parable, and must explain how vv. 8b-9 became inserted between v. 8a and v. 10 in the tradition; 3) the parable is banal; 4) did Jesus use the Aramaic roots proposed by Schwarz?; 5) can we be certain that Jesus taught in Aramaic? On the latter point see S.E. Porter, 'Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?', *TynBul* 44 (1993), pp. 199-235.

58. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 292.

instructive to note the use of φρόνιμος elsewhere in contexts of eschatological crisis and response (Mt. 7.24; 24.25; 25.2; Lk. 12.42).[59] Taking this approach, we are once more confronted with the shock element of Jesus' parables, which invite the hearer to further reflection and application.[60]

Bailey, however, takes a slightly different angle in stressing that the master must praise the manager so as not to be seen in a negative light by the debtors. Thus he accepts the praise given to him by the debtors as a possible impetus to further business. In another sense, the manager is praised because he truly is wise, for by acting to preserve himself he correctly assessed the generosity and mercy of the master.[61]

Of course, the interpretation of τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας impinges heavily on our discussion at this point. Does the genitive[62] relate to the manager's initial behaviour,[63] or to his actions in vv. 5-7,[64] or to both? Though Perkins takes τῆς ἀδικίας to refer merely to the unjust system which the manager has utilized,[65] it would appear that the term has a direct moral and personal connotation here. Moreover, as Stein points out, unless τῆς ἀδικίας relates to vv. 5-7 it is redundant in v. 8. The manager is not termed unjust in vv. 1-2, and if his later activity was a

59. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 127-28; Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 117; Stein, *Parables*, pp. 110-11; Hendrickx, *Parables*, pp. 180-81; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 262-67.

60. Ellis (*Luke*, p. 200) comments, 'the parable is not an example to follow but a "real-life" illustration from which a lesson can be learned'.

61. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 101-102. This proposal will be discussed shortly.

62. Most take it as a Hebraic genitive (so Marshall, *Luke*, p. 620; Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 97-98), though whereas Marshall understands it in a descriptive sense of his behaviour, de Silva ('Prudent Steward', pp. 264-65) points out that the Hebrew construct chain more often denotes possession or relationship. Thus τῆς ἀδικίας refers to the sphere in which the manager moves. Notwithstanding this shift in nuance, the term is still obviously related to the man's present behaviour.

63. So Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 198-219; Fitzmyer, 'Story', pp. 32-33.

64. So Stein, *Parables*, p. 109; Parrott, 'Dishonest Steward', pp. 503-504; Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 69-70.

65. Perkins, *Parables*, p. 168. Similarly H. Kosmala, 'The Parable of the Unjust Steward in the Light of Qumran', *ASTI* 3 (1964), pp. 114-15, who understands the genitive to refer to a standing characteristic of the world, with the point being that the manager belongs to the evil world; and J.S. Ukpong, 'The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-13): An Essay in Inculturation Biblical Hermeneutic', *Semeia* 73 (1996), pp. 189-210.

return to lawful practice he would hardly be given the designation immediately following.[66]

It would appear, then, that the best interpretation of v. 8a rests in viewing the actions of vv. 5-7 as dishonest, with the manager praised for his shrewd initiative in a personal crisis.

The language of v. 8b is surely not that of the master, but reflects Jesus' comments on why the manager was praised. Although there are strong arguments for regarding it as inauthentic in this context,[67] Bailey has responded by arguing for its authenticity on both literary and linguistic grounds, as it serves to provide the necessary corrective to the approval of the manager. It highlights the fact that he was not praised for his dishonesty but for his prudent action.[68]

The manager stands as a representative of the *sons of this age*, who act with more wisdom in their affairs than do the *sons of light*. The phrase οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτου, which is attested neither in the Qumran[69] nor in the rabbinic writings, appears only here and in Lk. 20.34 (where it refers to mortal human beings). Given the dualist contrast here with τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτὸς, it appears to carry a negative sense of the worldly or evil age. The expression *sons of light* is not uncommon in the New Testament (Jn 12.36; Eph. 5.8; 1 Thess. 5.5) and was the self-designation of the Qumran community (1QS 1.9; 2.16; 3.13; 1QM 1.3, 9, 11, 13). It obviously refers to the followers of the truth, given that φῶς is a common biblical metaphor for truth and salvation (Isa. 9.2; Jn 1.4-5; 12.35-36; Eph. 5.8).

εἰς τὴν γενεὰν τὴν ἑαυτῶν is best taken in the sense of the dealings of worldly people with one another in the matters that concern them.[70]

66. Stein, *Parables*, p. 109; Ireland, *Stewardship*, p. 70.

67. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1105 (following Jeremias), who regards vv. 8b-9, vv. 10-12 and v. 13 as three separate sayings of Jesus, the first two from L, the latter from Q, linked by the catchwords μαμωνᾶς / ἀδικία. They have been attached to the parable by the pre-Lukan tradition and reflect an early moralizing and allegorizing in the Gospel tradition. He points out that the second ὅτι is extremely awkward, thus revealing 'the kind of suture that it really is' (p. 1108).

68. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 107-109. Note that Bailey regards this prudent action as relying on the mercy of the master to be his salvation.

69. Note, however, the similar expression בני תבל (*sons of the world*) found in manuscript B of the Damascus Rule (CD 20.34). This would appear to be a reference to those outside of the community. See M.G. Steinhauser, 'Noah in his Generation: An Allusion in Lk 16:8b', *ZNW* 79 (1988), pp. 152-57.

70. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 621. Steinhauser ('Noah', pp. 152-57) draws a parallel

This raises the question as to what exactly the sons of light are to be wise about. It is usually suggested, in keeping with v. 8a, that they are to be wise concerning the eschatological situation.[71] The difficulty with this proposal, together with Bailey's suggestion that they are to rely on the mercy of the master,[72] is that, by definition, the sons of light *have responded* to the eschatological situation and *have relied* on God's mercy.

Among those who recognize the weaknesses of this understanding of v. 8b are those who interpret the parable as irony.[73] This serves to shift the criticism from the sons of light to the sons of this age. Mann takes an entirely different approach in claiming that the verse is a warning to Jesus' followers not to be sectarian like the Qumran community (the sons of light), but to make friends with the Gentile world.[74] However, the phrase *sons of light* is clearly used in the New Testament of Christian disciples, and it seems best to agree with Mann's own confession that this interpretation is 'no more than intelligent guesswork'.[75]

Ireland, following Krämer, argues forcefully that vv. 8b-9 must be seen as part of the original parable. He observes that without these verses the parable remains vague and has no stated application. Moreover, he finds it difficult to postulate another context for these sayings. He also criticizes the tendency of Jeremias (and others) to polarize the

between this phrase and two similar references to the righteousness of Noah in his generation (Gen. 6.9; 7.1 LXX). He notes that in the *Genesis Rabbah* Noah's righteousness is discussed against the backdrop of the wickedness of his contemporaries. For Rabbi Judah, Noah would not have been considered righteous in a different generation, whereas for Rabbi Nehemiah, Noah would have been more righteous. Steinhauser concludes that like Noah, the dishonest manager is only considered to be wise against the wickedness of his own generation. However, Steinhauser has overlooked the not insignificant detail that the LXX of Gen. 6.9 and 7.1 uses the preposition ἐν, while our parable employs εἰς. The former carries a locative sense while the latter has a referential aspect. While it may indeed be true that the sons of this age are only wise in their own generation, the use of εἰς gives the phrase a slightly different nuance.

71. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 621; Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 182.

72. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, p. 108.

73. See the discussion below.

74. C.S. Mann, 'Unjust Steward or Prudent Manager', *ExpTim* 102 (1991), pp. 234-35. See also Geldenhuys, *Luke*, pp. 415-16, who perceives here the condemnation of an aloof attitude to 'worldly' people.

75. Mann, 'Unjust Steward', p. 235.

hortatory (vv. 8b-13) and the eschatological (vv. 1-8a).[76] Rather, eschatology governs ethics, for the twofold nature of the kingdom demands appropriate use of material possessions. The present aspect of the kingdom constrains by its radical demands; the future aspect of the kingdom compels by an ultimate accountability to God. Consequently, vv. 8b-9 not only retain the eschatological thrust of the parable, they also provide the key to its original meaning. The parable is about eschatological crisis, but crisis over one's attitude to wealth in view of the arrival of the kingdom of God.[77]

Ireland has made some telling points. However, if the original parable was only about wealth and possessions then it is difficult to fathom why Jesus would frame this lesson within a story in which a manager defrauds his master of money. Unless we accept the view that the manager uses his own money (i.e. commission payments) to win further employment (and Ireland does not), the proper use of his own goods is not an issue.[78]

Given the difficulties stated above, it can be seen why many regard v. 8b as a later addition to the parable which shifts the focus off eschatological decision and onto some form of habitual practice. In this sense it aligns with v. 9, which uses the dishonest manager as a positive example of how to conduct one's daily affairs and live a purposeful existence.[79] Nevertheless, Ireland is correct in affirming that, given the nature of kingdom life, the eschatological situation has not been entirely removed.

While most believe that 16.9-13 represents three separate sayings of Jesus brought together because of the catchwords μαμωνᾶς/ἀδικία,[80]

76. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 47-48.

77. Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 84-96. See also Krämer, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 183-236.

78. Of course one may invoke v. 12 to show that worldly goods do not, in fact, belong to us. However, this then makes vv. 10-12, where the dishonest manager implicitly functions as a negative example, the prime focus of the parable. This is precisely the opposite intention of vv. 8b-9, which use him as a positive example.

79. Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 465.

80. Dodd, *Parables*, p. 30, whose oft quoted statement, 'we can almost see here notes for three separate sermons on the parable as text', forms the basis for such views. See also Fitzmyer, 'Story', pp. 27-30; Via, *Parables*, p. 156; W. Loader, 'Jesus and the Rogue in Luke 16:1-8a: The Parable of the Unjust Steward', *RB* 96 (1989), pp. 518-32.

some are prepared to defend the original unity of these verses.[81] Others, on the other hand, are prepared to go further and argue that some (or all) of these verses are part of the original parable. Fletcher,[82] who together with Porter[83] favours an ironical reading of the text (which in turn allows all these verses to be original in this context), points out that the details of v. 9 fit so closely with those of the parable it is unlikely that they ever circulated independently. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to posit a context for the verse apart from this setting.[84]

Blomberg cautiously suggests that vv. 9-13 could have been spoken by Jesus in this context as further comments on the parable. Moreover, he believes that vv. 8a-9 contain three lessons, each related to one main character. Verse 8a (the praise given by the master) teaches that God calls us to account, v. 8b (the shrewdness of the manager) emphasizes the prudent use of resources, and v. 9 (the grace of the debtors) pictures heavenly reward.[85]

Pirot[86] and Barth[87] both regard 16.1-13 as an original unit, with

81. Oesterley, *Parables*, p. 196. See also Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 110-18, who contends that these verses are a skilfully constructed poem, with καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω being an editorial addition serving as the link to 16.1-8. This link was facilitated by common words and themes, and serves to correct a possible misunderstanding that the parable advocates dishonesty. However, Bailey believes that vv. 9-13 actually have more of an affinity with 16.19-31. Both sections deal with money and the life to come, and instruct as to how one should use personal wealth. In contrast, the dishonest manager had no money of his own to use. Bailey concludes that, together with 16.14-15, 16.9-13 originally introduced 16.19-31.

82. R. Fletcher, 'The Riddle of the Unjust Steward: Is Irony the Key?', *JBL* 82 (1963), pp. 19-20. The ironical interpretation of the parable will be discussed shortly.

83. Porter, 'Steward', p. 130.

84. Note Jeremias, *Rediscovering*, p. 35, who proposes the context of a saying directed to tax-collectors and other dishonest people. For those who regard v. 9 as part of the original parable, see Marshall, *Luke*, p. 622; F.E. Williams, 'Is Almsgiving the Point of the "Unjust Steward"?', *JBL* 83 (1964), p. 296, who interprets the whole parable in terms of almsgiving. Ireland (*Stewardship*, pp. 84-85) comments regarding v. 8b, 'The obscurity of the words demands a context... they fit as well in their present context as anywhere else in the NT'.

85. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 245-47.

86. J. Pirot, *Jesus et la richesse: Parabole de l'intendant astucieux (Luc XVI, 1-15)* (Marseille: Marseillaise, 1944), pp. 17-31. This work was unavailable to me and is cited by Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 247 n. 99.

87. M. Barth, 'The Dishonest Steward and his Lord: Reflections on Luke 16:1-

vv. 8b-9 functioning as a hinge. For Pirot, vv. 1-8a focus on the behaviour of the sons of darkness and vv. 10-13 on the sons of light. For Barth, vv. 1-8a emphasize the need to be as shrewd as serpents and vv. 10-13 as innocent as doves.

In summary, while there is no consensus on the original unity of 16.1-13, in the present context vv. 9-13 serve to focus attention on Luke's key theme of the proper use of wealth and possessions.[88] While this may not have been the original intention of the parable, it may legitimately be derived from it.

Verse 9 is an allegory of v. 4 in an eschatological sense.[89] The homes of the debtors are now eternal dwellings, and the manager's actions have become the proper use of wealth. The disciples are encouraged to make friends by the means of *unjust wealth* so that they may be welcomed into the eternal dwellings.

μαμωνᾶς is itself a neutral term of uncertain etymology. It is often seen as deriving from the Hebrew root אמן meaning *to be firm/reliable* and *to trust/believe* (hiphil), thus giving a play on words in Aramaic with πιστός.[90] The link with τῆς ἀδικίας parallels two expressions found in the Qumran writings; הון חמס (*the wealth of violence* [1QS 10.19]) and הון הרשעה (*the wealth of evil* [CD 6.15]), terms which appear to be synonymous with *worldly wealth*, or colloquially, *filthy lucre*. Thus the expression does not necessarily refer to money dishonestly gained, but to the tendency of money in general to enslave and lead to unrighteous behaviour.[91]

In the history of interpretation of this parable there have been various attempts to change the force of the preposition ἐκ to that of a comparison.[92] However, these are desperate measures and are unwarranted

13', in D.Y. Hadidian (ed.), *From Faith to Faith* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1979), p. 65.

88. For a discussion of this theme, see Chapter 13, Section 2 below.

89. For some (e.g. C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 598-99), this in itself is evidence of a later application. However, I have already established in Part I that the existence of allegory does not imply inauthenticity per se. Kloppenborg ('Dishonoured Master', p. 475) believes that as the verse suits Luke's redactional intentions so well, it is probably a Lukan creation.

90. See F. Hauck, 'μαμωνᾶς', *TDNT*, IV, pp. 388-92. Hauck argues that every time the word is used as an object of trust the focus is negative.

91. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1109; Kosmala, 'Unjust Steward', p. 116; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 465; Hendrickx, *Parables*, pp. 184-85.

92. For instance, to mean *apart from, rather than, outside of.* See Fitzmyer,

given the sense of μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας proposed above. As Porter argues, the preposition has an instrumental sense, signifying how friends are to be made.[93]

It is unclear to whom φίλους relates. Most believe it to be those who receive the money (i.e. almsgiving—as in 12.33), though some suggest that it may be a reverential periphrasis[94] or a reference to the angels.[95]

ὅταν ἐκλίπῃ may indicate a time when wealth merely runs out,[96] though more likely it emphasizes a future time (at death or the End) when it ceases to be of use (cf. Ps. 49.16-17).[97] It contrasts the treasure in heaven spoken of in 12.33 as ἀνέκλειπτον.

The subject of δέξωνται could be the *friends*, a reverential periphrasis,[98] or possibly a personification of the almsdeeds themselves.[99]

τὰς αἰωνίος σκηνάς clearly has an eschatological connotation (cf. *4 Ezra* 2.11; *1 En.* 39.4). The following parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus will provide an example of such eternal habitations, referred to as the *bosom of Abraham* (16.22), while Porter believes that it has been previously represented by the banquet given to the prodigal son (15.23-32).[100]

What then is the meaning of this obscure verse? In the Lukan context

Luke, p. 1109, for a discussion.

93. Porter, 'Steward', p. 148 n. 4.

94. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 622; Morris, *Luke*, p. 249. Schmid (*Lukas*, p. 260) believes that God is the *friend* because he alone recompenses acts of love. However, this idea seems too much like an earning of God's favour, which does not square with Luke's stress on salvation as a merciful act of God.

95. Jeremias, *Rediscovering*, p. 34; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 321.

96. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 621, following the use of the verb in 22.32; 23.45.

97. So Kistemaker, *Parables*, p. 234; Morris, *Luke*, p. 249; Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 100-101. The variant reading ἐκλίπητε, attested by some inferior manuscripts and patristic sources, gives the latter sense, though it is certainly not the original reading.

98. Ellis, *Luke*, p. 201; J. Reiling and J.L. Swellengrebel, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 563.

99. Williams ('Unjust Steward', p. 295) cites various rabbinic sources in support. Grundmann (*Lukas*, p. 321), though believing that the plural δέξωνται relates to God himself, discusses the possibility that the almsdeeds act as a type of intercessor for the righteous, contrasting the indictments of their accusers at the judgment (cf. Lk. 11.31-32).

100. Porter, 'Steward', pp. 149-50.

(cf. 12.33; 16.14, 19-31) it most obviously refers to almsgiving.[101] Christian disciples are encouraged to use worldly wealth to help the needy (the *friends*) so that in due course they will be welcomed into their heavenly home. However, as Marshall states, this should not be construed as salvation by generosity, but as a testimony to discipleship.[102] In vv. 8b-9, therefore, the dishonest manager functions as a positive example of how to use worldly wealth in the light of the eschatological future.

Verses 10-12 are from L. ἄδικος is the link word to the parable, with πιστός providing the internal link.

Fitzmyer notes that the wisdom saying of v. 10 is more at home in the parable of the Pounds as a reflection on 19.17, where the one who was faithful with a little is considered worthy to be bestowed with much.[103] In this context, however, we are meant to understand that the dishonest manager could not be trusted with little. Thus the focus has shifted from using the manager of the parable as a positive example, to employing him as a negative example.[104]

Verse 11 applies, in eschatological terms, the general pronouncement of v. 10.[105] True wealth will only be given in response to a prudent use of worldly wealth. The eschatological focus is highlighted by the use of τὸ ἀληθινὸν, which in the New Testament is often used of what is characteristic of the new age (Jn 1.9; 6.32; Heb. 8.2; 9.24). However, τὸ ἀληθινὸν need not refer to heavenly reward per se, but may apply to the privileges and responsibilities of the gospel,[106] or to any gift of God that has an abiding quality.[107]

101. A view supported by Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 385; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, pp. 434-35; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 321; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 621; Morris, *Luke*, p. 249; L.J. Topel, 'On the Injustice of the Unjust Steward: Luke 16:1-3', *CBQ* 37 (1975), pp. 221-22; Krämer, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 131-34. Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 1107) views it in more general terms as the proper use of possessions.

102. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 622. See also Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 102-103, 216. Given this sense, the verse accords with the Q saying about storing up treasure in heaven (Mt. 6.19-21; Lk. 12.32-34).

103. Fitzmyer, 'Story', p. 29. See also Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 189.

104. Contra Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 156-59), who argues that the manager was faithful in little, for he used the money wisely.

105. Against Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 1107), who believes vv. 10-12 relate only to daily responsibilities.

106. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 189.

107. Marshall (*Luke*, p. 623) is probably correct in believing that behind the

Verse 12 continues the eschatological focus with τὸ ὑμέτερον[108] providing the parallel to τὸ ἀληθινὸν of v. 11. One's own wealth (i.e. true wealth) is wealth that is given by God. This contrasts with τῷ ἀλλοτρίῳ, with the implicit assumption that worldly wealth does not belong to the disciples but to God (cf. 1 Chron. 29.14; 1 Cor. 8.6).[109]

Verse 13 is a Q saying (Mt. 6.24) which conveys a general pronouncement about wealth utilizing a chiastic pattern. A servant[110] cannot serve two masters, for he will always have divided loyalties. God, on the other hand, demands total loyalty.

Again the dishonest manager is used implicitly as the contrast, as the one who fails in his attempt to serve both his own and his master's interests.[111] The *Gospel of Thomas* expands this saying,[112] while it receives further elaboration in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16.19-31).

3. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Dishonest Manager has received both diverse and elaborate interpretation over the years. I shall first of all discuss some of the more novel approaches before assessing the traditional view.

Donahue believes that the main focus of the parable is that God,

interrogative of the rhetorical question looms the figure of God, who bestows heavenly treasure in the new age. On the contrary, Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 1110) does not consider that it is necessary to see God here.

108. ὑμέτερον is better attested (P^{75} ℵ A D W etc.) than the variant ἡμέτερον (B L). The latter is an attempt to explain the origin of true wealth as from the Father and the Son. See Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 623-24.

109. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 623.

110. οἰκέτης is more general than οἰκονόμος, but more specific than Matthew's οὐδείς. This shows: 1) that the saying probably originated in a more general context; and 2) how Luke forges the link with this parable. See Fitzmyer, 'Story', p. 42; Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 192.

111. Some regard the saying as out of context here. Donahue (*Gospel in Parable*, p. 163), for instance, believes that it is irrelevant to the parable as the manager did in fact serve two masters. However, although he might have attempted to serve two masters, he ultimately failed and thus was consequently sacked! It is also extremely difficult to accept the view of Williams ('Unjust Steward', p. 297), who contends that nothing in 16.1-12 indicates that the manager was trying to serve two masters. Parrott's distinction between the manager who uses mammon and the one who serves mammon is also unwarranted.

112. 'A man cannot mount two horses or stretch two bows' (*Gos. Thom.* 47).

typified by the master, does not punish immediately but gives time for human response. Disciples are thereby taught to be free from a servile fear of God. Verses 8b-13 show that Christians are to live wisely in a world where mammon is present, not in fear of a harsh God, but in connection with a God who requires them to use worldly wealth faithfully.[113] While we may agree with the latter point, the main problem with the above is that, as we have seen, the focus of the parable is not on the mercy of the master but on the cunning of the manager.

Via believes that the story is modelled on the Greco-Roman *picaresque comedy*, which depicts the story of a successful rogue. The rich owner is seen as a scoundrel who arbitrarily and unjustly dismisses the manager without a fair hearing. The manager, however, has a chance to get even. The hearer identifies with the crisis faced by the manager and sides with him in his efforts for revenge. For Via, the tension aspect provided by v. 8a may be mere comic relief, designed to show that 'our well being does not ultimately rest on dead seriousness'.[114]

A similar approach is taken by Scott, who supports the idea of the unjust dismissal of the manager by seeing a degree of violence in the Greek word ἀφαιρεῖται.[115] However, Scott goes further than Via by arguing that in the final scene, where one expects punishment but finds praise, the master has acknowledged his initial actions as unjust. This leaves the hearer uncomfortable for having identified with the manager. The parable, therefore, shows the way in which justice operates in the kingdom of God as opposed to the world. It breaks the link between power and justice, and in fact substitutes vulnerability for power.[116] 'The Kingdom is for the vulnerable, for masters and servants do not get even.'[117]

Beavis follows Via and Scott to some degree, presenting evidence from the *Life of Aesop*. Aesop was a slave who repeatedly turned the tables on his master. For Beavis, the manager of Lk. 16.1 should be understood as a slave who gets revenge on his master. The parable may

113. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, pp. 168-69.

114. Via, *Parables*, pp. 155-69.

115. ἀφαιρέω appears in the middle voice in Rom. 11.27, the active in Mk 14.47; Lk. 1.25; Heb. 10.4; Rev. 22.19, and the passive in Lk. 10.42. Only in Mk 14.47 does it carry any connotations of violence. Hence Scott's argument lacks foundation and requires other contextual factors for corroboration.

116. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 260-66; *idem*, 'Praise', pp. 173-88.

117. Scott, *Hear*, p. 266.

also (indirectly) be dignifying the role of slavery.[118]

Apart from the issue of whether Jesus' original hearers would have understood the intricacies of the picaresque comedy, we should reject the above proposals on the grounds that they incorrectly view the central thrust of the parable as dealing with revenge, when in fact the motive for the manager's behaviour is presented as self-preservation.

Borsch makes a number of points with varying degrees of usefulness. His belief that the master commends the manager because he is as cunning and shrewd as himself rests of course on the assumption that the owner is a villain. His comment about the story being about enduring hope in the midst of calamity has some merit. Elsewhere Borsch understands the parable as an example of how we should *not* behave, thus aligning with the ironical interpretation (see below). However, his proposal that the story teaches that God can use even Christian rascals to mediate grace masks a rather strange hermeneutical approach.[119]

For Breech, the focus of the story is the rich owner, who is more concerned with human relationships (evidenced by his relationship with the manager) than his own possessions.[120] In a similar vein Kloppenborg, who believes that the original dismissal was to uphold the master's honour, argues that v. 8a subverts the honour code. The master now ignores his own honour and is converted 'from the myopia of his society's system of ascribed honour'.[121] However, we need to insist that the story does not centre around the rich owner but the dishonest manager, as evidenced by the first ὅτι clause in v. 8.

A quite original proposal has been offered by Baudler[122] and

118. M.A. Beavis, 'Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust Steward (Lk 16:1-8)', *JBL* 111 (1992), pp. 37-54.

119. Borsch, *Many Things*, pp. 20-24.

120. Breech, *Silence of Jesus*, pp. 101-13.

121. Kloppenborg, 'Dishonoured Master', pp. 492-93. Kloppenborg finds support for his proposal from the parables of the Great Feast, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, which challenge prevailing social customs. See also H.J.B. Combrink, 'A Social-Scientific Perspective on the Parable of the "Unjust" Steward (Lk 16:1-8a)', *Neot* 30 (1996), pp. 281-306, who shows how the parable subverts an honour-shame culture by having a master praise a social inferior who dishonoured him.

122. G. Baudler, 'Das Gleichnis vom "betrügerischen Verwalter" (Lk 16,1-8a) als Ausdruck der "inneren Biographie" Jesu', *TGeg* 23 (1985), pp. 65-76.

Loader,[123] who interpret the parable christologically as a vindication of Jesus' own actions in the face of opposition. In Loader's hands, the parable becomes an allegory (contrary to his denial of such) in which familiar motifs are employed. The reduced debts equate to the debt of sin removed, the master represents God who vindicates Jesus' roguish forgiveness of sin outside of the law, while the manager typifies Jesus as the authorized agent of God against claims of his lack of authority. This is an ingenious suggestion, but it fails through lack of consistency. It cannot cope with the initial actions of either the master, who sacks his agent, or the agent, who squanders the goods of the master.[124]

Kamlah proposes, on the basis of the Old Testament understanding of the servant/steward as one commissioned by and accountable to God, that οἰκονόμος relates here to the Pharisees, who have badly managed their stewardship. Rather than ease the burdens of the people (reduce their debts) and make friends with tax-collectors and sinners, they have burdened others with the minutiae of the law. In its original setting, therefore, the parable functions primarily as a polemic against the Pharisees, stressing that God calls all his servants to account. In its later setting, the parable serves as an exhortation along similar lines to Christian disciples.[125] However, while the parables of Luke 15 are certainly directed at the prejudice and negligence of the Pharisees, 16.1-8 appears to function differently. The manager is labelled *dishonest*, and is applauded not for his overwhelming concern for others, but for his prudent self-interest.

More recently, Hoeren and Bindemann have both interpreted the parable in terms of vindication of the Torah. Hoeren examines the story against the background of Jewish aristocrats searching for legal ways to avoid the remission of debts in the sabbatical year. The manager and his actions thus symbolize the priority of the religious law over the secular.[126] For Bindemann, the manager, together with the unjust judge in

123. Loader, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 518-32. A similar reading is proposed by Paliard, *L'économe infidèle*, pp. 133-35, who believes that the parable can be understood as a picture of Christ's rejection, death, and ultimate vindication.

124. Loader's attempt to excuse this, by arguing that we do not need to find allegorical referents for every detail ('Unjust Steward', p. 529), is a desperate plea!

125. E. Kamlah, 'Die Parabel vom ungerechten Verwalter (Luk 16,1ff.) im Rahmen der Knechtsgleichnisse', in O. Betz *et al.* (eds.), *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), pp. 276-94.

126. T. Hoeren, 'Das Gleichnis vom ungerechten Verwalter (Lukas 16.1-8a)—

18.1-6, finally act in a manner that upholds the law, with both parables designed to counter Jesus' opponents who considered him to be acting unlawfully.[127]

Perhaps the best argued alternative to the traditional view is the approach which treats the parable as irony. This was first proposed by Fletcher, who understands v. 8a to be a statement by the master, and v. 8b as an ironic declaration by Jesus about the sons of this age who are consumed with material interests. The sons of light, on the contrary, are *not* meant to imitate this attitude. Verse 9 is a ironical command to imitate the dishonest manager (i.e. can the disciples really expect to secure an eternal future by this means?). Fletcher points out that such an interpretation allows μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας to have its full weight. Wealth is truly inherently evil, and to procure heavenly reward by its means is totally out of sympathy with Jesus' normal teaching. Moreover, almsgiving has nothing to do with this parable.[128]

Fletcher's approach has recently been supported by Porter,[129] who feels that we are forced to look for alternative solutions to the parable because the surface meaning is implausible and contrary to norms of belief. He is critical of distinctions between *what* the manager did and *how* he did it as too arbitrary. Furthermore, he argues that the manager, having been sacked for dishonesty, can hardly be applauded for it later.

Porter insists that 16.1-13 should be treated as a unity, for this is the manner in which it has been transmitted.[130] In addition, he emphasizes the links to the previous parable of the Prodigal Son. Both characters seek acceptance by the sons of this age, and find this acceptance as long as their economic resources continue. Therefore, when we read 16.1-13 in light of ch. 15, together with 16.14 and 16.19-31, any view which

zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Restschuldbefreiung', *NTS* 41 (1995), pp. 620-29.

127. W. Bindemann, 'Ungerechte als Vorbilder? Gottesreich und Gottesrecht in den Gleichnissen vom "ungerechten Verwalter" und "ungerechten Richter"', *TLZ* 120 (1995), pp. 955-70.

128. Fletcher, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 15-30. Fletcher also points to the use of irony elsewhere in the Gospels (e.g. Mk 2.17; Lk. 15.7).

129. Porter, 'Steward', pp. 127-53.

130. Porter ('Steward', p. 130) questions why, if Luke found the parable difficult, he did not omit it as did Mark and Matthew? In response, apart from this being an unanswerable question, it may simply be the case that Mark and Matthew did not know the parable.

applauds financial advancement, by whatever means, is totally out of context.

For Porter, v. 8b is ironical in that the sons of this age feel they can use their wealth to exert an influence on the age to come. Verse 9 continues the irony by suggesting that unrighteous mammon can buy friends and secure a future. Given this understanding, vv. 10-13 fit neatly with the parable. The manager was not faithful in little and was not faithful with another's goods. In fact, he did not once make the correct choice.

Porter takes the final statement οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ as a sarcastic question, with οὐ expecting a positive answer. This serves as a neat transition to v. 14, where the Pharisees are pictured implicitly as the prodigal son (in his initial behaviour [15.11-13]), the dishonest manager (16.1-8), and the rich man (16.19-31).

An ironical reading of our parable is also supported by du Plessis[131] and Parrott.[132] Parrott seeks to interpret 16.1-8a in light of the Lukan parables as a whole, where he finds common narrative devices such as soliloquy, contrast, the rabbinic argument *a fortiori*, and a concluding question. He also notes the following common motifs: 1) the things which result in repentance; 2) repentance; and 3) divine acceptance. Parrott believes that in 16.1-8a the same themes should be evident.

Parrott rejects any notion that the manager acted in an honest way. Rather, like the rich fool (Lk. 12.16-21), he is a negative example showing what is incompatible with repentance (in contrast with the prodigal son), for he places hope in that which will ultimately fail. Parrott takes v. 8a as ironical, and follows Torrey in proposing that it was originally a question. Verses 8b-9 are later additions which misunderstood the focus of the parable, while vv. 10-12 are appropriate in this, their original setting.

The main problems with Parrott's proposal are that he makes the mistake of insisting that every parable should fit his predetermined scheme. In addition, his arguments as to how the question aspect of

131. I.J. du Plessis, 'Philanthropy or Sarcasm? Another Look at the Parable of the Dishonest Manager (Luke 16:1-13)', *Neot* 24 (1990), pp. 1-20, who also believes that the master's praise of the manager in v. 8a is sarcastic, in the sense that the crafty scheme failed (p. 12). However, this interpretation also requires that vv. 8b-9 be treated as sarcasm or irony, a view that is rejected below.

132. Parrott, 'Dishonest Steward', pp. 499-515.

v. 8a was lost in transmission are dubious.[133]

How valid, then, are the ironical readings of this parable? Their great strength is that 16.1-13 can be read as a unity, with the manager functioning as a negative model throughout. But the main problem is that vv. 8-9 do not appear to indicate irony in their present form. As Porter admits, we are compelled to look for such an interpretation because of the incongruity with Christian belief.[134] Such an approach is dangerous, however, for whenever we feel something is incongruous we ignore the most obvious reading of the text and search for other, often less plausible, solutions. In this case irony is not implausible, it simply seems too subtle and too convenient. There appears to be no contextual warrant for taking v. 8 or v. 9 in such a way.[135] In fact, Porter's assessment of v. 8b is untenable.[136]

The traditional interpretations of the parable accept the story at face value and point to Jesus' common practice of using unsavoury characters (for instance, the unjust judge or the unhelpful neighbour) in his parables.[137] This is part of the shock value and should not be glossed over or transformed into something less forceful.

Such interpretations follow a combination of two approaches. The

133. Parrott ('Dishonest Steward', p. 513) claims that as the negative force of the question could not be expressed in Aramaic (as it could in Greek), during transmission the question was wrongly taken to warrant a positive answer. Thus the focus shifted from the negative actions of the manager, to searching for a way to explain his actions as positive. Then when vv. 8b-9 were added, the link word ὅτι ensured that v. 8a was read as a positive statement. In response, it is difficult to imagine why the negatively oriented question would be taken as positive, for it is far easier to interpret the parable in negative terms (e.g. vv. 10-13). The difficulties only begin when v. 8a is taken as positive!

134. Porter, 'Steward', p. 127.

135. Nor should we accept the proposal of R. Merkelbach, 'Über das Gleichnis vom ungerechten Haushalter (Lucas 16,1-13)', *VC* 33 (1979), pp. 180-81, who argues that vv. 8-9 were intended as indignant questions, but the lack of punctuation in early texts obscured this fact. In reply, three factors need to be considered: 1) there is no textual support for such a proposal in the entire manuscript tradition; 2) we would have expected μή / μήτι to preface an indignant question; 3) this leaves the parable quite insipid and lacking a shock factor.

136. Porter ('Steward', p. 148) believes that the verse is ironical in that the sons of this age feel they can exert an influence on the age to come by the means of wealth. However, the verse does not say this. On the contrary, the focus is on matters pertaining to their own generation.

137. Schramm and Löwenstein, *Unmoralische Helden*, esp. pp. 15-22.

first regards the original parable as delivering an eschatological warning to sinners, who face a crisis occasioned by the dawning of the kingdom.[138] Jesus' story is thus an urgent call to repentance, for everything is at stake and a decision must be made with respect to one's future allegiance.[139] This urgency is underlined by the use of φρονίμως, and possibly by the extravagance of the amounts owed and deducted.[140]

The second approach sees in the original parable teaching about the proper use of possessions,[141] with some wanting to link this with the theme of repentance.[142]

4. *Conclusion*

The traditional interpretation, while not solving all the problems presented by the parable, is difficult to overthrow. In fact, in its present literary setting, Lk. 16.1-13 teaches *both* eschatological warning *and* a proper attitude to wealth. Indeed, as Ireland stresses, for the Christian reader faced with the radical demands of the inaugurated kingdom, the two motifs are not mutually exclusive but inseparably connected. One's attitude to wealth and possessions is governed by the nature of the

138. A similar idea is found in the Lukan version of Settling With One's Accuser (Lk. 12.57-59), which, in contrast to Mt. 5.25-26, has definite eschatological overtones.

139. A view championed by Jeremias (*Parables*, pp. 127-28), who sees the primary audience as the unbelieving crowds. He is followed by such interpreters as Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 331; Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 106-107; Crossan, *In Parables*, p. 117; Hendrickx, *Parables*, pp. 192-93; Stein, *Parables*, pp. 110-11; Weder, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 262-67; Wiefel, *Lukas*, pp. 291-92; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 601. P. Fassl ('"Und er lobte den ungerechten Verwalter" [Lk 16,8a]: Komposition und Redaktion in Lk 16', in R. Kilian *et al.* [eds.], *Eschatologie: Bibeltheologische und philosophische Studien zum Verhältnis von Erlösungswelt und Wirklichkeitsbewältingung* [Ottilien: EOS, 1981], p. 117) proposes that the parable is a funny story without moral scruples used to aid Christ's kingdom proclamation.

140. For the latter, see Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 20. One hundred measures of oil, for instance, amounted to approximately five hundred days' wages for the average worker.

141. So Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 217-19; Krämer, *Das Rätsel*, pp. 236-39; Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 48-115; Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 158-59; D.L. Mathewson, 'The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13): A Reexamination of the Traditional View in Light of Recent Challenges', *JETS* 38 (1995), pp. 29-39.

142. As does Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 218-19.

present age on the one hand, and on the other hand by ultimate accountability to God on the last day.[143] Thus, while for Jesus' original audience the crisis consisted in his proclamation of the inbreaking of the kingdom and the dawning of the new age, Luke focuses this crisis on a proper attitude to material wealth. At this point the parable argues *a fortiori*. 'If he, being evil...how much more you...' (cf. Lk. 11.13; 18.6).[144] 16.10-13 makes essentially the same point, but now the hero of the parable has become a model to avoid at all costs.

The parable is thus a challenge to evaluate correctly the nature of the present time and take necessary action.[145] In this Gospel, especially given the immediate setting (16.14, 19-31; cf. 12.33), this action involves a correct use of worldly wealth exemplified by almsgiving, for wealth is an impediment to correctly perceiving the nature of the present age. One prepares for crisis, therefore, by a detachment from wealth, because for Luke, stewardship is a by-product of the dawning of the kingdom.[146]

One further question remains. Does the figure of God appear in the parable? Given the tendency for the master figure to represent God (or Jesus) in other parables, this is a legitimate query, though the answer will ultimately depend on how one interprets the parable.

Bailey emphasizes the mercy of the master, who could have had the manager flogged and criminally charged for his initial wastefulness.

143. Ireland, *Stewardship*, pp. 84-96, 214-15. Regarding the latter, the appeal to renounce worldly wealth and possessions in light of future rewards appears repeatedly in the synoptics (Mk 10.30; Lk. 14.13; 16.19-31; 18.22). Williams ('Unjust Steward', p. 293) labels this 'eschatological self-interest'. Nevertheless, Krämer (*Das Rätsel*, pp. 131-34) correctly notes that here the motivation for almsgiving is not to receive the reward of the eternal habitations, but to avoid the danger of wealth which could lead a person to miss out on entering the eternal habitations.

144. Williams, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 293-97. Topel ('Unjust Steward', pp. 216-27) also argues for a combination of the eschatological and material views, although he stresses that Luke's wider context is the theme of forgiveness (Lk. 15.1-32; 18.10-14). He believes that the parable addresses this latter theme by the use of allegory. As the manager forgave the debtors (which appears 'unjust' in the eyes of the world) so are the disciples to forgive one another (which also appears 'unjust' in the eyes of the world). In response to Topel, there appears no warrant to allegorize the manager's actions in terms of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a selfless act, whereas the manager was acting purely out of self-interest. Furthermore, the subsequent sections (16.14-18, 19-31) have little to do with forgiveness.

145. Perkins, *Parables*, pp. 170-71.

146. Fitzmyer, 'Story', p. 37; Ireland, *Stewardship*, p. 160.

But the manager relied on the mercy of his master to solve his dilemma, believing that as he was a gracious man he would accept the reduced debts. Bailey finds here (in an *a fortiori* argument) an allusion to the need to rely on the God of mercy in a crisis.[147] However, Loader is probably correct in stating that Bailey gives too much weight to a minor aspect of the parable.[148] Furthermore, Derrett's study shows that the criminal law could not be enforced against an agent who cheated his master. At most, he would be forced to make restitution.[149] It is also far from clear that the praise given by the master originated from a merciful and gracious disposition.

Loader himself believes that the master represents God who vindicates Jesus' authority to forgive sins.[150] However, as stated above, this is unwarranted allegory and cannot cope with the master's initial dismissal of the manager.

Donahue contends that the master typifies the response of God who grants time for response by not punishing immediately.[151] On the contrary, however, we need to emphasize that the master summarily dismissed his manager.

The above approaches result from attempting to read too much into the parable. The most we can say is that if the master figure does represent God in any way, the story emphasizes that God calls to account.[152] In fact, this would appear to be legitimate, given that the expression ἀποδίδωμι τὸν λόγον is used elsewhere in the sense of giving an account to God at the last judgment (Mt. 12.36; Heb. 13.17; 1 Pet. 4.5; cf. *m. Ab.* 3.1; 4.22).[153] Seen in this way, the parable highlights the judicial function of God, thereby underlining the need for a life of commitment to the values of the kingdom.

147. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant*, pp. 105-107.
148. Loader, 'Unjust Steward', p. 525.
149. Derrett, 'Unjust Steward', p. 202.
150. Loader, 'Unjust Steward', pp. 528-32.
151. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, pp. 168-69.
152. Meynet, *Saint Luc*, II, p. 169.
153. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 158-60.

Chapter 10

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (16.19-31)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus continues one of Luke's favourite themes, that of the proper use of wealth and possessions. Although it is impossible to determine a precise setting for the parable in the ministry of Jesus,[1] it is, nevertheless, possible to trace the flow of thought which has resulted in the composition of Luke 16.[2] It is conceivable that this flow of thought authentically captures that of Jesus in the historical setting.[3]

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus serves as a striking contrast to the parable of the Dishonest Manager (Lk. 16.1-9). Whereas the manager used money wisely to obtain a secure future, the rich man is a outstanding example of the misuse of wealth, consequently failing to procure a welcome into the eternal habitations (16.9).[4]

After the appended applications to the Dishonest Manager (vv. 10-13), there are a number of sayings which appear to lack internal unity.

1. Because the parable lacks a specific context, Hunter (*Interpreting*, pp. 83-84, following Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 296-301) believes that it was originally addressed to the Sadducees in response to a request for a sign to authenticate the existence of the afterlife (cf. Mk 12.18-23). However, this is not a parable dealing with the afterlife, but a parable concerning wealth and possessions.

2. Hintzen (*Verkündigung und Wahrnehmung*, p. 360) examines several motifs shared by the parables of the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Prodigal Son, including *hunger, feasting, father/son*, and *clothing as a sign of honour/wealth*. He concludes that both parables come from the same tradition.

3. As proposed by J.D.M. Derrett, 'Fresh Light on St. Luke xvi: II. Dives and Lazarus and the Preceding Sayings', *NTS* 7 (1960–61), pp. 375-80. Derrett's conclusions will be discussed shortly.

4. For a fuller discussion on the relationship between the two parables, see A. Feuillet, 'La parabole du mauvais riche et du pauvre Lazare (Lc 16,19-31) antithèse de la parabole de l'intendant astucieux (Lc 16,1-9)', *NRT* 101 (1979), pp. 212-23.

While many have recognized the link between these sayings and the Rich Man and Lazarus via the rebuke given to the money-loving Pharisees (v. 14) and the reference to the law and the prophets (v. 18),[5] Byrne has observed that the relationship is far deeper. In v. 16 Jesus announces that the era of the law and prophets (i.e. the basis for Pharisaic doctrine) has now been replaced by the kingdom age. However, the demands of the law have not been abolished but heightened by the radical demands of the kingdom (v. 17). One such example is the law regarding divorce, which Jesus extends to forbid re-marriage of a divorced partner (v. 18).

The parable that follows in vv. 19-31 is but another illustration of this intensification of the law. The Pharisees, who were not necessarily of the wealthy class and who certainly held to a doctrine of charity, are nonetheless rebuked for being lovers of money (v. 14). Thus, what is at issue is not their wealth as such, but their hypocritical attitude to money. Such an attitude is encountered in Lk. 11.39 (Q) and 20.47 (Markan), where the Pharisees and scribes are condemned for their mere external conformity to the law and for their abuse of money. The parable, therefore, serves to intensify the law (as understood by the Pharisees) regarding the use of wealth and concern for the poor, for it does not permit a mere external piety.[6]

Regarding possible backgrounds to the parable, there are a number of interesting parallels which also depict a reversal of fortunes in the afterlife. In this connection, Gressmann's study of Egyptian and Jewish sources has proved most influential in the history of interpretation.[7]

5. For a discussion of the relationship of the parable to the preceding sayings, see R.P.C. Hanson, 'A Note on Luke xvi.14-31', *ExpTim* 55 (1943–44), pp. 221-22; Derrett, 'Dives', pp. 364-70; Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, pp. 172-74; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, pp. 156-59; Hintzen, *Verkündigung und Wahrnehmung*, pp. 366-68. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 255, notes that the term βδέλυγμα may be the unifying theme for the chapter, for it is used in the LXX in the context of financial management (Deut. 25.16) and divorce (Deut. 24.6), as well as idolatry (see also the Qumran writings [CD 4.14–5.10] where the three nets of Satan are described as *fornication, riches* and the *profanation of the temple).* Derrett ('Dives', pp. 375-80) notes that a link between usury, divorce and the responsibility of the rich to the poor occurs in *Exod. R.* 31. Assuming Luke captures the thread of Jesus' original teaching in ch. 16, Derrett proposes that the *Exodus Rabbah* illustrates an existing 'catena of ideas' that may undergird Jesus' thought.

6. Byrne, 'Forceful Stewardship', pp. 10-14.

7. H. Gressmann, *Vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus: eine Literar-*

Gressmann proposed that Lk. 16.19-31 is an adaptation of a popular Egyptian folk-tale which found its way into Jewish lore via Alexandrian Jews. This tale tells of Si-Osiris, who is reincarnated and sent by Osiris, the ruler of the realm of the dead (Amnte), to confute a powerful Ethiopian magician. One day the father of Si-Osiris, after viewing the funerals of a rich man and a poor man, commented that he wished to enjoy the fate of the rich man in the life to come. However, Si-Osiris conducts him through Amnte in order to convince him of his error, for the fortunes of the two men have been reversed. The rich man is in torment while the poor man is clothed in the rich man's apparel. The reason given was that the good deeds of the poor man outweighed his bad deeds, and vice versa for the rich man. Consequently, his father changed his mind.[8]

The Jewish version of the story concerns a poor scholar and a rich tax-collector named Bar Ma'yan. In the afterlife, the scholar strolled along the banks of the rivers of paradise, whereas the tax-collector stood next to the water but was unable to quench his thirst.[9]

The similarities between these stories and our parable, particularly the reversal of fortunes of the rich and the poor, have led to the quite common conclusion that in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Jesus simply added some original features to a traditional story. For some scholars this adaptation is reflected in vv. 19-26, while vv. 27-31 are inauthentic on the grounds that they make a different point regarding the refusal to give signs.[10]

geschichtliche Studie (Berlin: Verlag der königlich Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1918).

8. A detailed account of the tale is given by K. Grobel, '"...Whose Name Was Neves"', *NTS* 10 (1963–64), pp. 376-78.

9. Reproduced in *y. Ḥag.* 77d and *y. Sanh.* 6.23c. It is possible that parts of this story are reflected in the parable of the Great Feast. See Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 178-79, and the discussion on this parable, above.

10. Crossan (*In Parables*, pp. 65-66) contends that vv. 27-31 are a creation of the early church, a post-resurrection interpretation of the parable in light of the Lk. 24 motifs of disbelief (24.11-12, 25, 41), Moses and the prophets (24.27, 44), resurrection (24.46), and repentance (24.47). These verses are directed against those who refuse to accept Jesus' resurrection or the witness of the Old Testament to this event. Scott (*Hear*, pp. 142-46) supports Crossan's arguments, although he believes that vv. 27-31 are a Lukan reshaping of the tradition. He points out that διαμαρτύρομαι and πείθω are characteristically Lukan, while nothing in vv. 19-26 prepares for vv. 27-31. See also C.F. Evans, 'Uncomfortable Words—V.

These assumptions can be questioned at two levels. First, the similarities between the Egyptian story and our parable have often obscured their differences. In the Rich Man and Lazarus, the characters are posed in some form of relationship while living; there is no emphasis on the difference in burials, the good deeds/bad deeds theme is absent, and there is no tour of the underworld (in fact there is a definite refusal to send a messenger from the dead). In summary, the differences would appear to be too great to maintain dependency.

A couple of recent studies have noted this, though they have proposed different solutions. Bauckham suggests that the Jewish versions are not dependent upon Si-Osiris as such (which probably predates the Christian era even though the extant version was recorded in the second half of the first century CE), but are versions of an earlier story that has been incorporated into Si-Osiris.[11] Thus, the similarities with our parable are due to 'a folkloric motif, around which many different stories can be built'.[12]

An entirely different solution has been proposed by Hock, who shifts his attention to Greco-Roman parallels. Using Lucian's dialogues *Gallus* and *Cataplus* as his prime example, Hock shows how, in the parable of Lk. 16.19-31, the descriptions of the rich man and the poor man are definitely not neutral, but follow standing literary conventions. Thus, while the morality of neither man is examined explicitly, the audience would understand that the rich are customarily portrayed as hedonistic and (sexually) immoral, whereas the poor are virtuous, industrious, and self-controlled.[13] The validity of Hock's proposal depends on the questionable assumption that a Palestinian audience would be familiar with the writings of the Cynics.

The second point in question is the legitimacy of breaking the parable into two distinct parts, which then allows the second part to be seen by some as inauthentic. It indeed appears strange that vv. 27-31, which

"...Neither Will They Be Convinced..."', *ExpTim* 81 (1969–70), pp. 230-31; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 826. Such views owe their origins to the influence of Jülicher (*Die Gleichnisreden* II, p. 634), who felt that the two parts of the parable were only loosely connected, and to Bultmann (*History*, pp. 196-97).

11. R. Bauckham, 'The Rich Man and Lazarus: The Parable and its Parallels', *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 225-46.

12. Bauckham, 'Rich Man and Lazarus', p. 229.

13. R.F. Hock, 'Lazarus and Micyllus: Greco-Roman Backgrounds to Luke 16:19-31', *JBL* 106 (1987), pp. 447-63.

include a request for a messenger to be sent from the dead, are deemed to be a secondary addition to a parable adapted from an Egyptian folk-tale, when one of the central features of that tale concerns an envoy sent from the dead![14] In addition, this separation of the parable not only breaks up the dialogue between Abraham and the rich man, it also fails to appreciate that vv. 27-31 further illustrate the rich man's character, thus providing a justification for the reversal of fortunes described in vv. 19-26.[15] Finally, vv. 27-31 serve to shift the focus away from the afterlife to the earthly situation, thereby enabling the parable to make its point about the proper use of wealth. After all, the concern is not so much to show why people are condemned to punishment, but to exhort the living to a particular course of action.[16]

2. *Analysis*

The opening formula ἄνθρωπος δέ τις ἦν πλούσιος is identical to 16.1, and would indicate that the following is a parable[17] and not an account of an actual historical event. The rich man is not named,[18] though he

14. Noted also by Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 826-27.

15. For a defence of the unity of the parable on structuralist grounds, see F. Schnider and W. Stenger, 'Die offene Tür und die unüberschreitbare Kluft: Strukturanalytische Überlegungen zum Gleichnis vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus (Lk 16,19-31)', *NTS* 35 (1978), pp. 273-83.

16. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 186) overgeneralizes this in claiming that the parable is a warning of impending danger. The parable is a warning, but a warning of a particular danger—i.e. the misuse of wealth and the neglect of the poor. Although arguing that the focus falls on vv. 27-31, Jeremias (*Parables*, pp. 182-83) supports the unity of the parable by drawing attention to the two historic presents in v. 23 and v. 29. He feels that this is evidence of pre-Lukan tradition, for Luke almost universally abandons the historic present when utilizing his Markan source.

17. As suggested by the variant reading in codex Bezae.

18. P^{75} gives him the name Νευης, which is possibly a shortened form of Νινευης (*Nineveh*), a name which also surfaces in the ancient Sahidic version. See L.T. Lefort, 'Le nom du mauvais riche (Luc 16.19) et la tradition copte', *ZNW* 37 (1938), pp. 65-72; H.J. Cadbury, 'A Proper Name for Dives', *JBL* 81 (1962), pp. 399-402; *idem*, 'The Name for Dives', *JBL* 84 (1965), p. 73; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1130. Grobel ('Neves', pp. 381-82) argues that Νευης comes from two Coptic words *nine* (*nothing*) and *oue* (*one/someone*), which appears in a Coptic version. Thus the name means *nobody*, and describes the man's status in Amnte. Grobel concedes that the reading is not original, but he believes that it does reflect an awareness of the folk tradition. P^{75} is dependent upon this tradition, but the scribe

receives a variety of titles in later literature.[19] He is commonly known as *Dives*, from the Latin meaning *rich*. This man is a perfect example of wealth, signified both by his clothing[20] and by his sumptuous feasting.[21]

In a unique situation in the Gospels, a person in one of the parables is named, though opinions differ as to the significance of the name *Lazarus*. The name is a shortened form of the Hebrew אלעזר, meaning *God helps*,[22] a fitting name here as the ensuing story shows. Possibly the name appears because of Abraham's role in the story, though it is unlikely that too much should be read into this association by giving to Lazarus a specialized function as Abraham's servant (cf. Gen. 15.2-4; 24.1-67).[23] Bauckham suggests that Lazarus is named, in line with other

shows less than a full grasp of Coptic by giving the name a Greek declensional ending. However, Grobel's proposal is tenuous, for he must rely on a single scribal correction in a Coptic manuscript.

19. See Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 211; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 634, for a summary of such names.

20. For the combination of *purple* and *fine linen* (πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον), see also Prov. 31.22 and 1QapGen 20.31. The inner garment was a fine Egyptian linen made of flax, a special luxury, while the outer garment was dyed purple. πορφύρα originally referred to the purple shellfish from which the dye was obtained, then was used of the dye and finally of the dyed garment itself. It signified either royalty or wealth (cf. Judg. 8.26; Est. 8.15; Rev. 18.12). See Str-B, II, pp. 222-23; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 183; Scott, *Hear*, p. 148.

21. εὐφραίνω forms a link to the parable of the Lost Son (15.23, 24, 29, 32), but it is unlikely to be meant negatively as a contrast, as Nolland (*Luke*, p. 828) proposes.

22. Grobel ('Neves', p. 381) finds the background to the use of this name in the Egyptian folk-tale, where the poor man originally had a name with a meaning similar to *Osiris helps him*. However, this makes an unwarranted assumption about the existence of such a name in the Egyptian original, and also assumes that this parable is dependent upon such a tale. See the discussion above. We should also dismiss the view of O. Glombitza ('Der reiche Mann und der arme Lazarus: Luk. xvi 19-31, Zur Frage nach der Botschaft des Textes', *NovT* 12 [1970], pp. 178-80), who contends that the name refers to Jesus himself (i.e. the one in whom God's help appears) and his rejection by the Jews. The parable makes perfect sense as a commentary on the use of wealth and possessions without resorting to an allegory of this nature.

23. V. Tanghe ('Abraham, son fils et son envoyé (Luc 16,19-31)', *RB* 91 [1984], pp. 557-77) sees Lazarus as the envoy of Abraham as in Gen. 24. In this connection, Derrett ('Dives', pp. 371-72) notes how according to *Midrash Genesis* Eliezer went about in disguise and reported to Abraham on how his children observed the law, especially in regard to concern for the poor. C.H. Cave ('Lazarus

stories in which one who returns from the dead is named, in the first place to stress the parallels, but finally to shock the audience by the refusal to send him, a refusal which is uncharacteristic in the folk tradition.[24] Danker considers that the naming of Lazarus indicates that he enjoys true personhood, whereas the rich man, despite his worldly affluence, lacks real identity.[25] More likely, the name is used to prepare for the reversal of fortunes that is about to occur.[26] In other words, the name is given primarily for its meaning. This Lazarus has also been equated with the Lazarus of John 11, especially since his resuscitation failed to convince the Jewish leaders. Arguments go both ways as to which story influenced the other.[27]

Lazarus is depicted in the extreme of poverty, not only in a financial sense but also physically. He was covered in sores[28] and probably lame, for others had placed him at the gate of the rich man, presumably to beg. The verb ἐβέβλετο highlights his helplessness. He was completely

and the Lukan Deuteronomy', *NTS* 15 [1969], pp. 319-25) reads Lk. 16.19-31 in light of Gen. 15 and Isa. 1.5. He sees Lazarus as a symbol for the Gentiles who find mercy, whereas Israel suffers judgment because of its unrepentance. However, although Jesus does speak of judgment falling upon Israel (Mt. 21.43-44; Mk 12.1-12; Lk. 19.41-44), the focus in this parable is upon an individual response to, and use of, wealth, not a national response.

24. Bauckham, 'Rich Man and Lazarus', p. 244.

25. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 283.

26. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 828.

27. R. Dunkerley ('Lazarus', *NTS* 5 [1958–59], pp. 321-27) argues that Lk. 16.19-31 was composed under the influence of the events of Jn 11. He then counters the obvious objection as to why Jesus would have raised Lazarus and then told a parable insisting that such action would achieve nothing, by claiming that the raising of Lazarus was proof, given in advance, to the disciples of the truth taught in the parable. They were not to rely on signs to win people over to the gospel. K. Pearce ('The Lucan Origins of the Raising of Lazarus', *ExpTim* 96 [1984–85], pp. 359-61), on the other hand, believes that John is dependent, to a large degree, on Luke. The raising of Lazarus is based both on the raising of the son of the woman of Nain and this parable. However, the parallels that Pearce cites are either dubious, or expected given the nature of death and the cultural factors at work. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 827) suggests that an awareness of the Johannine tradition may be reflected in Lk. 16.30-31. For a detailed discussion see J. Kremer, 'Der arme Lazarus. Lazarus, der Freund Jesu: Beobachtung zur Beziehung zwischen Lk 16,19-31 und Joh 11,1-46', in F. Refoulé (ed.), *A cause de l'Evangile: Etudes sur les Synoptics et les Actes* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), pp. 571-84.

28. ἑλκόω was a medical term meaning *to be ulcerated* (BAGD, p. 251). Lazarus was probably not a leper, as he would not then be begging in public.

immobile, unable to gather food for himself. Thus, at the outset, the contrast between the two men is painted dramatically.

πυλών refers to a large ornamental gateway to a city or a mansion (cf. Mt. 26.71; Acts 10.17). Although some have made much of the gate's symbolic significance,[29] the least it does is to emphasize that the rich man could not have been ignorant of Lazarus and his condition. Although it is not stated that he ignored him, it is implied. In any event, the banquet and feasting are inside and Lazarus is outside.

The vast difference in living standards between the two men is accentuated by the fact that Lazarus was waiting for the scraps from the rich man's table,[30] with ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι[31] expressing a continual longing for food that was apparently left unsatisfied (cf. 15.16).[32] However, his condition was even more pitiful, for his sores were continually licked by passing dogs. This should not be taken as a picture of affection, but as an underscoring of the deprivation of Lazarus. It is not clear whether the dogs are meant to be wild street animals or the domestic animals belonging to the rich man. Both possibilities make a point. If the former, it was considered a gross indignity to be delivered up to the dogs (1 Kgs 21.19; Ps. 22.16, 20), and in early Christian thought κύων remained a term of abuse (Phil. 3.2; Rev. 22.15). If the latter, it is ironical that these dogs probably ate the scraps that could have been given to Lazarus, then finished off their meal by licking his sores, thus

29. W. Vogels ('Having or Longing: A Semiotic Analysis of Luke 16:19-31', *EglT* 20 [1989], p. 40) argues that the parable implicitly portrays the good things as inside the gate and the bad things outside. Scott (*Hear*, p. 150) sees the gate as an invisible boundary which can either let in or keep out. The rich man can use the gate to aid Lazarus. Schnider and Stenger ('Die Offene Tür', p. 277) see the gate as the basis for the structural unity of the parable. The gate is the means by which the rich man can enter into a relationship with Lazarus. However, because he declines to utilize the gate properly, it becomes an unbridgeable chasm. Tanghe ('Abraham', pp. 565-67), against Schnider and Stenger, claims that the gate should not be seen as a division between the two men that can be passed. Rather, the contrast is between *gate* and *table*.

30. Jeremias (*Parables*, p. 184) suggests that the reference is to scraps of bread used by the guests to wipe their hands and then thrown from the table.

31. The variant reading (ℵ² A D W Δ Θ Ψ f13 etc.) that incorporates τῶν ψιχίων from Mt. 15.27 is surely secondary.

32. In every instance that Luke uses ἐπιθυμέω with the infinitive, it expresses an unfulfilled desire (15.16; 16.21; 17.22; 22.15).

aggravating his plight.[33] Late Judaism saw this type of scenario as evidence of a sinner being punished by God.[34]

ἐγένετο δὲ (v. 22) introduces the decisive point in the story. Both men died. Their deaths are described in reverse order to their lives, possibly to highlight the reversal of fortunes that occurred at this point.[35] Although both men would have received a burial,[36] and undoubtedly the rich man's was a magnificent affair, the contrast is not drawn between the relative splendour of their burials (as in the Egyptian and Jewish stories), but in terms of their subsequent fate. The rich man was simply buried (ἐτάφη), but Lazarus was carried off by the angels[37] to the presence of Abraham.

The phrase ὁ κόλπος Ἀβραάμ[38] is not attested in pre-Christian Jewish literature.[39] Possibly it is a development of the Old Testament idea of sleeping with one's ancestors (for instance, Gen. 15.15; 1 Kgs 1.21).[40] The bosom was the place of honour at a banquet (Jn 13.23), and

33. For the former view see Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 184; Scott, *Hear*, p. 151. For the latter view see Derrett, 'Dives', p. 372; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 829, 832. For a discussion of κύων see O. Michel, *TDNT*, III, pp. 1101-1104.

34. Str–B, I, pp. 819-22; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 184. Cave ('Lazarus', pp. 319-25) believes that the description of Lazarus is modelled on Isa. 1.5 and Gen. 15.2, and is meant to demonstrate the necessity for Israel to repent. However, given the theme of reversal in this parable, together with the conclusion in vv. 27-31, it is the rich man who embodies the negative image.

35. Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 203.

36. It was considered a scandal in Jewish thought for any person not to receive a burial. See Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 393; Scott, *Hear*, p. 152. Possibly, however, this is a deliberate omission.

37. The idea stresses divine care (cf. *Herm. Vis.* 2.2.7, though possibly this is dependent on our parable). The idea of angels accompanying the souls of the righteous is not found in rabbinic sources prior to 150 CE. For the deeds done by the angels of service, see Str–B, II, pp. 223-25. Grobel ('Neves', p. 378) suggests that the angels are a substitute for some other bearer in the Egyptian version of the story.

38. In rabbinic Judaism, the term signified either fellowship with Abraham, or in some texts, participation in the feast of the blessed. See R. Meyer, 'κόλπος', *TDNT*, III, pp. 824-26. For the idea of the patriarchs welcoming the faithful into glory, see *4 Macc.* 13.17. Grobel ('Neves', p. 380) contends that Abraham is a Jewish substitute for Osiris, the lord of Amnte.

39. In *b. Qid.* 72a the term could be a euphemism for death. Str–B, II, p. 227, concludes that there is no trace in Jewish literature of the term used as a compartment of Sheol reserved for the righteous.

40. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 829) proposes that the idea may be of a translation to heaven of the privileged saints of the Old Testament, a tradition which is based on

was also a metaphor for closeness and security. The idea here could be, therefore, of close fellowship with Abraham at the messianic banquet (cf. 13.28-29).[41] This is certainly a stark contrast to v. 21. Now the rich man is excluded from the banquet,[42] while Lazarus occupies the highest place in the abode of the righteous.[43] We are told that he is comforted (παρακαλεῖται, v. 25), and although the place is not expressly called *paradise*, this appears to be the thought.

The rich man, however, experienced torment[44] in Hades. ᾅδης[45] normally translates the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל, the underworld or place of the dead. In the New Testament ᾅδης is never used with respect to the saved. Its relationship to γέεννα (hell), the place of final punishment, is not altogether clear.[46] Though Hades is often seen in terms of an intermediate state, the distinction here is not so apparent.[47] Possibly the parable may reflect the tradition of a proleptic experience of judgment

Enoch (Gen. 5.24) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2.11), and also incorporated Moses. Lazarus is thus placed on a par with such notable saints.

41. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 636; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 284.

42. Schnider and Stenger, 'Die offene Tür', p. 281; Byrne, 'Forceful Stewardship', pp. 6-7.

43. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 184. Hock ('Lazarus and Micyllus', p. 456) shows how κόλπος has parallels in sepulchral epigrams of the *Greek Anthology* and in actual inscriptions on graves. He argues that it signifies not honour, but protection and care.

44. βασάνος originally referred to the touchstone by which metals were tested, then the torture rack. See J. Schneider, *TDNT*, I, pp. 561-63.

45. See Jeremias, 'ᾅδης', *TDNT*, I, pp. 146-49; Str-B, II, p. 228; IV, pp. 2, 1016-1165.

46. Note, however, the views of W.J.P. Boyd, 'Gehenna—According to J. Jeremias', in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Biblica 1978: II. Papers on the Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), pp. 9-12, who insists that in the New Testament there is no sharp distinction between Hades and Gehenna. The two terms are synonymous. Boyd has been opposed by J. Osei-Bonsu, 'The Intermediate State in Luke–Acts', *IBS* 9 (1987), pp. 115-30, who maintains a clear distinction between the two. Gehenna is the place of final, eternal, fiery, and bodily punishment. He concludes that for Luke, Hades is simply the intermediate abode of all the dead (Acts 2.27). It would appear, however, that Osei-Bonsu places too much weight on Acts 2.27. The use of ᾅδης in this verse is ambiguous and contributes little to the argument.

47. The distinction has almost disappeared in *1 En.* 63.8-10; 99.11, though clearly there is an idea of an intermediate state in *1 En.* 51 and 2 Macc. 7.9-14, 36-37. Klostermann (*Das Lukasevangelium*, p. 531) believes that the reference in Lk. 16.23 is to the place of final punishment.

and blessing prior to the final judgment (*1 En.* 22.11; *4 Ezra* 7.80; *4 Macc.* 13.15; cf. Jude 6; 1 Pet. 3.19-20).[48]

Another problem concerns the relationship between *Abraham's bosom* and *Hades*. Their apparent proximity may reflect the idea of a twin compartment of Sheol, one for the righteous and one for the wicked, found in *1 En.* 22.8-14 and possibly *4 Ezra* 7.36, 85, 93.[49] A similar idea exists in the Egyptian story of Si-Osiris, where Amnte is divided into a number of halls or compartments. That the two compartments are sharply distinguished is illustrated firstly by the phrase ἀπὸ μακρόθεν. The rich man sees Lazarus a long way off. This is reinforced[50] by the mention of a great chasm (χάσμα, v. 26)[51] which has been fixed between them (cf. *1 En.* 22.9-14). ἐστήρικται is a divine passive, with the perfect tense highlighting that what stands fixed cannot be bridged. God's judgment is irreversible.

It is possible that the chasm is meant as a contrast to the gate (v. 20). During his life, the rich man could have passed through the gate to assist Lazarus. Now Lazarus cannot assist him, for the gate has become an unbridgeable chasm,[52] a chasm dug by the rich man himself because of the manner in which he lived.[53]

What are we to make of the imagery and geography of Hades in this parable? Apart from the fact that precision is impossible because Jewish conceptions of Hades were so fluid,[54] clearly it is not the intention of

48. See also the *Book of Jannes and Jambres* (in Charlesworth [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, pp. 437-42). Though the text is fragmentary, it has a parallel to our parable. Jannes dies and is punished for his opposition to Moses and Aaron. He visits his brother and warns him to repent. For a discussion see Bauckham, *Rich Man and Lazarus*, pp. 241-42.

49. Grobel ('Neves', p. 379) feels that *1 En.* 22 is 'suspiciously Egyptian'.

50. ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις is a Septuagintalism (Sir. 48.15; Job 12.9), here expressing addition.

51. Hintzen (*Verkündigung und Wahrnehmung*, p. 335) argues that χάσμα has its origins in heathen-Hellenistic conceptions, and, therefore, could not come from Jesus himself. However, E.F. Bishop ('A Yawning Chasm', *EvQ* 45 [1973], pp. 3-5) contends that the common Palestinian wadi provides a perfect origin for the concept.

52. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 154-55, 158-59.

53. Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 173.

54. The clearest parallels to our parable occur in *1 En.* 22, where there is mention of a deep void (vv. 1-2), different compartments for the righteous and wicked souls (v. 9), a spring of water (v. 9), judgment for those who previously escaped it (vv. 9-10), the use of ζωή to denote *lifetime* (v. 20—a rare usage in the New Testa-

Jesus to give teaching about the precise nature of the intermediate state or of life after death. This is a parable, not a theological treatise, and the focus is on this life, not the afterlife. Thus we do not have to resort to the belief that here a parousia-centred eschatology has been abandoned in favour of an individual eschatology.[55] Nor should we give much weight to the ideas that vision[56] or communication is possible between the realms of the dead, or that the characters have bodies, or even that memory of this life persists in the afterlife.[57] The story simply requires these details, details which may or may not be truly reflective of the afterlife.

The rich man's use of πάτερ (v. 24) is significant. In the eyes of some Jews, to be a descendant of Abraham,[58] and therefore circum-

ment), and an afterlife vindication story seen in the reference to Cain and Abel (vv. 5-7). These parallels are discussed by L. Kreitzer, 'Luke 16:19-31 and 1 Enoch 22', *ExpTim* 103 (1992), pp. 139-42. This builds on an earlier study by A.O. Standen, 'The Parable of Dives and Lazarus and Enoch 22', *ExpTim* 33 (1921–22), p. 523.

55. This is discussed by E. Reinmuth, 'Ps.-Philo *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 33,1-5 und die Auslegung der Parabel Lk 16:19-31', *NovT* 31 (1989), pp. 32-34. Reinmuth scrutinizes several approaches to this issue, including that of G. Schneider who argues that in Luke individual death has replaced the parousia to some extent. However, Reinmuth rightly concludes that 'individuelle und allgemeine Eschatologie sich keineswegs ausschließen müssen, sondern integrierende Bestandteile eines Gesamtrahmens sein können'. The same conclusion is reached by J. Dupont, 'L'après-mort dans l'oeuvre de Luc', *RTL* 3 (1972), pp. 3-21, though he points out that Luke himself makes no attempt to integrate these two aspects. J.T. Carroll (*Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke–Acts* [SBLDS, 92; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988], pp. 63-64) notes that in concentrating upon the fate of the individual, Luke is merely echoing a contemporary trend whereby the focus of eschatology is not merely corporate, but stresses individual accountability to God.

56. For visual contact between the abodes of Hades see *4 Ezra* 7.85, 93; *2 Bar.* 51.5-6; Str–B, II, p. 228. Boice (*Parables*, p. 214) suggests that the wicked viewing the righteous should not be taken in a physical sense, but in the sense of *understanding*.

57. M.J. Harris ('The New Testament View of Life after Death', *Themelios* 11 [1986], p. 48) concedes this, but then still wants to find evidence in the parable of a memory of the past, a capacity for reason, an astuteness of perception, and a consciousness of surroundings! See also W. Powell, 'Parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi.19-31)', *ExpTim* 66 (1954–55), pp. 350-51. While these faculties may, in fact, exist in the afterlife, such a belief should not be based upon this parable.

58. For Abraham as father of the Jews, see also 1.55, 73; 13.16; 19.9.

cised, was enough to save a person from eternal punishment.[59] Now the audience is shocked. Jesus reinforces the teaching of John the Baptist, who claimed that to be a descendant of Abraham counts for nothing (cf. Lk. 3.8; Jn 8.39; Rom. 9.6-7). What matters is repentance (v. 30).

ἐλέησόν με has an ironical twist. The rich man now seeks the mercy that he had not shown, wanting to use Lazarus to ease his thirst in the burning fire of Hades.[60] Of course, Lazarus dipping his finger in water[61] would alleviate nothing, but the use of hyperbole is designed to stress the severity of the torment. The waters of paradise contrast the fires of Hades.[62]

By addressing the rich man using τέκνον (v. 25), Abraham acknowledges physical kinship. But it avails him nothing. One's eternal fate is recompense for one's earthly fate. The rich man is now receiving what Lazarus had to cope with in his earthly life. On the surface, this seems to indicate a reversal of fortunes based on economic prosperity, for nothing is mentioned explicitly in the parable concerning the relative morality of either man. Thus Bauckham rejects the common consensus that the reversal is based on the piety of Lazarus and the immoral deeds of the rich man. He feels that such notions have been imported from the Egyptian and Jewish parallels. Rather, the reversal of fortunes is based on the injustice of unequal distribution of wealth.[63]

In response, it is clear that the text does not teach an automatic reversal of fortunes, for Abraham himself was a rich man. However, to say that reversal is based on the injustice of inequality then raises the obvious question of who is responsible for such injustice. The parable clearly shows that the rich man had done nothing to alleviate one such instance that faced him every time he passed through his own gate. It is evident from the way the parable unfolds that the rich man's fate is

59. See the discussion in Chapter 15, Section 2c, below.

60. For the idea of fire as a symbol of punishment in the afterlife, see *1 En.* 10.13; *2 En.* 10.2; Mt. 13.42; Jude 7; Rev. 20.14. For the idea of thirst, see *4 Ezra* 8.59; Str–B, II, pp. 231-32.

61. This assumes his proximity to water, a feature that is found in the Jewish story of Bar Ma'yan and in *1 En.* 22.9. In the Egyptian tale, Osiris, the lord of Amnte, is also associated with water. Osei-Bonsu ('Intermediate State', p. 122) draws a link between Lk. 16.24 and *1 En.* 17.4—the magical water of life. Thus only a drop was needed to quench the rich man's thirst.

62. Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 204.

63. Bauckham, 'Rich Man and Lazarus', p. 36.

determined by his relationship to Lazarus.[64] Furthermore, if the rich man's morality is not at stake, the repentance motif, introduced in vv. 27-31, is otiose. Clearly he did not repent, his sin being a violation of the teaching of the law and the prophets regarding the poor. He was totally indifferent to the needs of others.[65] Finally, by leaving the basis for the reversal implicit, the parable forces the hearer to search for a valid reason. Neither a Palestinian nor a Greco-Roman audience would have had much difficulty responding.[66] The righteousness of Lazarus is also implicit, both in the name itself and in Luke's common equation of the poor with either the righteous or those who receive the grace of God (1.52-53; 4.18; 6.20; 7.22; 14.13, 21; 21.3).

For the first time in the parable, the rich man appears to show concern for others, albeit only members of his own family (v. 27). Nevertheless, he still wants to use Lazarus for his own ends, requesting Abraham to send him to warn[67] his brothers about punishment in the afterlife. Possibly, however, this request betrays his feelings of unfair treatment. Had he had knowledge of his fate he would have acted differently.[68]

The idea of sending a messenger from the dead was not uncommon.[69]

64. T. Lorenzen, 'A Biblical Meditation on Luke 16:19-31: From the Text toward a Sermon', *ExpTim* 87 (1974-75), p. 42.

65. D.P. Seccombe (*Possessions and the Poor in Luke–Acts* [SNTU, B/6; Linz: SNTU, 1982], p. 177) points out that the condemnation of the rich man lies in his failure to give charity. Having good things in his lifetime, he failed to store up treasure for himself in heaven by responding to the needs of others.

66. See above for Hock's analysis of the Greco-Roman tradition. On the basis of these parallels, Hock argues that the rich man is not condemned because of his neglect of the poor, but because of his immorality and hedonism. However, in the Lukan context this is hardly likely, and assuming that Luke here captures an authentic strand of Jesus' teaching, it would also be unlikely in the original setting. Furthermore, the Old Testament prophets condemned the rich on the basis of their attitude to the poor. This was their immorality.

67. διαμαρτύρομαι may mean *to witness successfully* or *earnestly*. The word is used repeatedly in Acts of testimony to the resurrection of Jesus (2.40; 8.25; 18.5; 20.21, 23, 24; 23.11; 28.23).

68. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 396; D. Wenham, *Parables*, p. 145.

69. Apart from the parallels already discussed, see Plato, *Republic* 10.614D and Lucian, *Demonax* 43. In the latter, in response to the question, 'What are things like in Hades?', the answer is given, 'Wait, and I will see that you get information directly from the place'. For a discussion see Bauckham, 'Rich Man and Lazarus', pp. 236-41. Bultmann (*History*, p. 197) also cites a Jewish story in which a woman

What is uncommon is the refusal of the request, a feature that tends to support the authenticity of these latter verses. The request is refused on the basis that enough revelation has already been given, through Moses and the prophets, for those who wish to pay heed.[70] The rich man had ample opportunity, given the blueprint available to him, for a proper response to the poor.[71] Consequently, he has not been unjustly judged, for his problem was not rational but moral (cf. Jn 3.19).

The rich man knows from personal experience that this revelation is not sufficient for his brothers, whom he feels need the proof of someone coming to them from the dead to warn them. He implies of course, that they are not listening to Moses and the prophets.

Abraham's reply underlines the fact that where the problem is moral, no evidence will shake people into repentance. Signs are simply not the issue (cf. 11.29). The use of ἀναστῇ (v. 31) is significant. No longer a mere messenger, but even a miracle of resurrection will not sway the hardened of heart.

The allusion here to the resurrection of Jesus and the continued unbelief by the Jews could not be missed by Luke's readers. Such a return did, in fact, occur, and Abraham's words were vindicated. If they did not listen to Jesus why send them a Lazarus?[72] This, of course, raises the issue of the authenticity of this verse, for it seems to indicate an early Christian interpolation designed to explain the failure of the resurrection to convince the Jews of the messiahship of Jesus.[73]

suffering in hell-fire sends a message to her husband who repents. However, Bultmann's proposal that this story forms the background for this parable has not found widespread support.

70. Tanghe ('Abraham', pp. 557-77) points out that this is a typically Jewish formulation that cannot possibly be the view of Luke. Rather, people must listen to the prophet-like-Moses (Lk. 9.36; Acts 3.22). While this may be so, Tanghe wishes to go further and see the possibility that 16.29 reflects a later Jewish/Christian controversy. The argument would then be ironical (i.e. 'You say that Moses and the Prophets are sufficient, then why do you need Lazarus?'). Given that the parable reflects a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*, however, this approach is not required.

71. For instance, Exod. 22.21-22; Lev. 19.9-10; 23.22; Deut. 10.17-19; 14.28-29; 16.9-15; 24.17-18; 26.12-15; Isa. 5.7-10; 30.12; 58.6-7; Jer. 5.25-29; 9.4-6; Hos. 12.7-9; Amos 2.6-8; Mic. 3.1-3; Zeph. 3.1-3; Mal. 3.5.

72. The correspondence between Lazarus, Moses and the prophets, and Jesus is discussed by Tanghe, 'Abraham', pp. 576-77.

73. C.F. Evans, 'Words', pp. 230-31; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 826.

Although the issue is complicated by textual variants,[74] given the parallels to our parable resurrection language would have made sense to the original audience.[75] Admittedly, there is a secondary application for Luke's readers, but this does not deny the authenticity of the verse.[76]

3. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is certainly not a discourse on the afterlife. Using images derived from a number of traditions, and drawing on the theological heritage of the Old Testament, the parable makes some powerful statements about the requirements God places on one's present life.

Foremost, the parable needs to be read as an indictment against Jewish prosperity teaching.[77] To be rich is not necessarily a sign of God's blessing. Rather, the radical demands of the kingdom require that wealth be used to alleviate the sufferings of those in need (cf. Mt. 25.31-46; *1 En.* 94.8-11). The parable does not condemn wealth as such, but it graphically illustrates Jesus' teaching about the difficulty for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (cf. 18.24). Of course it is not impossible, as the story of Zacchaeus illustrates (19.1-10). But the criterion for entry is not physical descent, but an attitude to material possessions that indicates a total commitment to Jesus and the demands of the kingdom (18.18-25; 6.20-26; 12.16-21; 12.33).

74. P^{75} reads ἐγερθῇ, while W has ἀπελθῇ. For a complete discussion of the textual issues concerning v. 31, see Tanghe, 'Abraham', pp. 557-63.

75. See Bauckham, 'Rich Man and Lazarus', pp. 225-46, who cites many stories of one coming back from temporary death to tell of the experience.

76. Given that Jesus repeatedly foretold his death and resurrection (9.22; 11.29-32; cf. 13.32), a resurrection itself foretold by the prophets (Acts 13.27-28; 24.14-21; 26.22-23; 28.23), there seems no reason to deny that he may have intended here a secondary reference to his own fate, in order to provide an opportunity for further reflection by his disciples after the event. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 831) notes that the point is not to say that the resurrection of Christ provides less revelation than Moses and the prophets. Rather, people fail to be convinced by one risen from the dead because they have already hardened themselves, a hardening evidenced by their refusal to obey Old Testament revelation. Grundmann (*Lukas*, p. 330) and Danker (*Jesus and the New Age*, pp. 285-86) propose that this verse suggests why the resurrection appearances were confined to the disciples.

77. Conceivably based upon Old Testament texts such as Gen. 24.35; Deut. 28.1-13; Job 42.10-17; Ps. 112.3; Eccl. 3.10-13. This is discussed further in Chapter 15, below.

The parable also continues Luke's concern for the poor and the marginalized,[78] a concern which has the backing of Moses and the prophets. In this Gospel, the poor consistently function as a symbol of the pious and/or those who receive God's mercy (1.53-55; 4.18; 6.20; 7.22; 14.13, 21; 21.3). While this may indicate that Luke wrote to encourage the poor among the readers of his Gospel, it is equally possible that he seeks to instil in the more wealthy a commitment to the care of the poor.[79] For those with an understanding of the law and the prophets, this functions as a call to obedience, with such readers represented by the five brothers of the rich man. For those without a religious heritage that emphasized concern for the poor, Luke writes to incorporate this concern into their understanding of the Christian faith.[80]

The parable also graphically illustrates the reversal of fortunes theme that was introduced in the Magnificat (1.51-53) and continued in the Sermon on the Plain (6.20-26; cf. 13.30).[81] As indicated above, this is not an automatic reversal, but an outworking of divine judgment in a moral sense.[82] In fact, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is the only instance in this Gospel where the rationale for such a reversal is implied.[83] In this instance, reversal for the rich man is based on his misuse of wealth and total neglect of the poor.[84] Thus the parable shows that the abuse of wealth has eschatological consequences. Seen in these terms, Lk. 16.19-31 functions more as a warning to the rich than as a promise to the poor.[85]

The repentance theme surfaces once more in the second part of the parable. This is no secondary element, for repentance, or more specifically the lack of repentance, provides the rationale for the reversal of

78. Discussed further in Chapter 13, Section 1, below.

79. See Chapter 13, Sections 1 and 2, and Chapter 16, Section 4, below.

80. For the latter, see Perkins, *Parables*, p. 72.

81. Note the parallel vocabulary between 6.20-26 and this parable: 1) πτωχός / πλούσιος; 2) χορτάζω; 3) παράκλησις / παρακαλέω.

82. J. Cantinat, 'Le mauvais riche et Lazare', *BVC* 48 (1962), p. 24.

83. Lk. 14.11 and 18.14 are slightly different in that they deal with arrogance and humility, qualities which, in themselves, provide the basis for reversal.

84. Against Crossan (*In Parables*, p. 66), who downplays the wealth and possessions theme.

85. H. Kvalbein, 'Jesus and the Poor: Two Texts and a Tentative Conclusion', *Themelios* 12.3 (1986–87), p. 84. Against Vogels ('Luke 16:19-31', p. 45), the parable does not insist on total poverty.

fortunes. However, in this parable repentance is defined as the proper use of possessions and concern for the poor.[86] This is not the sum total of repentance, but Luke wants to emphasize that this is one aspect of it. The rich man did not repent, for he showed no concern for Lazarus. So he suffers in Hades. His five brothers (the audience) may suffer a similar fate if they do not repent. Thus the parable has a 'lingering bite'.[87]

Tied to the repentance theme may also be a warning about the insistence on signs (cf. Mt. 16.1-4; Mk 8.11-13; Lk. 11.29-32). For the sceptical, as well as for the unrepentant, signs do nothing more than confirm the existence of a stubborn and rebellious heart.[88]

Finally, the question arises as to whether God appears in the parable. It would appear that Abraham, as father of the Jews, speaks on behalf of God.[89] As such, the parable speaks about God's righteous action in the face of injustice.[90] Human accountability to God is thereby stressed, with the reward/punishment motif underlining God's role as eschatological judge. The name *Lazarus* also helps to convey God's love for the poor and downtrodden.

86. Hintzen (*Verkündigung und Wahrnehmung*, pp. 378-82) argues that in the Lukan context this parable functions first as a proclamation of salvation, and than as an ethical demand. The poor man in the bosom of Abraham corresponds to the bestowal of salvation, which is obtained by belief in Jesus, who is the complete realization of Moses and the prophets. This representation should, in turn, lead the Christian community to show compassion on the poor themselves. For Luke's readers, the poor are primarily the church at Jerusalem (cf. Acts 11.27-30). However, while Hintzen correctly observes the pivotal role that 16.19-31 plays in Luke's overall theology, the parable itself appears to function more as a warning rather than as a proclamation of salvation.

87. Byrne, 'Forceful Stewardship', p. 9.

88. Jeremias (*Parables*, pp. 186-87) believes that the parable was told against a sceptical, sign-seeking mentality.

89. Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 205; Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 204; Cantinat, 'Le mauvais riche et Lazare', p. 24.

90. Scott, *Hear*, p. 158.

Chapter 11

THE JUDGE AND THE WIDOW (18.1-8)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Judge and the Widow follows the eschatological discourse regarding the coming of the Son of Man (17.20-37). The eschatological theme continues in the parable with the motif of the justice/judgment of God, while the reference to the coming of the Son of Man in 18.8b provides a concrete link to the preceding section. The parable also contains the theme of prayer and petition, parallelling to a large extent the parable of the Friend at Midnight (11.5-8). This theme is continued in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector which follows (18.9-14).

Although the authenticity of the core parable (18.2-5) is generally accepted,[1] the unity of 18.1-8 has been challenged at several levels. It seems clear that v. 1 is a Lukan introduction to the parable (composed in light of v. 8b) that interprets the parable in advance for the reader.[2] However, the introduction does not miss the main point of the parable,[3]

1. The exceptions are Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 121; E.D. Freed, 'The Parable of the Judge and the Widow (Lk 18:1-8)', *NTS* 33 (1987), pp. 38-60; Goulder, *Luke*, pp. 660-62. One of Freed's main reasons for attributing the parable to Luke is Luke's narrative device of repetition. However, not only are some of the repetitions Freed lists for this parable not convincing (see pp. 56-57), one would expect to find a certain amount of repetition in narrative fiction of this type. All in all, Lk. 18.1-8 lacks the smoothness of a freely composed unit.

2. So Bultmann, *History*, p. 193; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 156; Schweizer, *Lukas*, pp. 184-85; D.R. Catchpole, 'The Son of Man's Search for Faith (Lk xviii 8b)', *NovT* 19 (1977), p. 90; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1176; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 671; Scott, *Hear*, p. 176. On this and other narrative asides in Luke–Acts, see S.M. Sheeley, *Narrative Asides* in *Luke–Acts* (JSNTSup, 72; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

3. Against Bultmann, *History*, p. 193; H.G. Meecham, 'The Parable of the Unjust Judge', *ExpTim* 57 (1945–46), pp. 306-307. This does not deny the possibility that v. 1 generalizes the parable.

it merely extracts one element from a tightly interwoven dual focus.[4]

There has also been a strong tendency to isolate vv. 6-8a as a secondary application of the parable.[5] Nevertheless, this is far from unanimous, and stems from a inclination to view all applications as secondary. However, vv. 6-8a can be defended as original on the grounds that not only was there a need to clarify the use of a rogue figure in the story,[6] but without an application we are left with a story concerning a judge's reluctance to grant justice to a widow. Verses 6-8a are necessary to facilitate the *a fortiori* argument, for without the Lukan introduction, vv. 2-5 are simply too vague to provide concrete referents.[7]

This leaves the issue of the authenticity of v. 8b, which is almost universally accepted as Lukan or originating from the pre-Lukan tradition.[8] Nevertheless, there are those who defend the complete unity of the parable, including v. 8b. Of the arguments proposed, the most convincing is that it is the Son of Man who assumes the eschatological function as the vindicator of God's elect, and thus v. 8b is a legitimate

4. So Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 670-71.

5. So Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden*, II, p. 286, who rejects the idea of vengeance as foreign to the mind of Jesus; Bultmann, *History*, pp. 175-76; Leaney, *St. Luke*, p. 235; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 346; E. Grässer, *Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den synoptischen Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin: deGruyter, 1960), p. 36; H. Paulsen, 'Die Witwe und der Richter (Lk 18,1-8)', *TGl* 74 (1984), pp. 13-21; R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke–Acts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982), p. 127; Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, p. 225; Scott, *Hear*, p. 177; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 635-37.

6. Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 155-57. C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, pp. 635-37) explains the use of the rogue figure as evidence of later Christian editing. However, if the problem existed for a Christian audience, then it certainly existed for a Jewish audience.

7. For support for the originality of vv. 6-8a see Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 155-57; W.G. Kümmel, *Promise and Fulfilment: The Eschatological Message of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 59; G. Delling, 'Das Gleichnis vom gottlosen Richter', *ZNW* 53 (1962), pp. 1-5 (accepts v. 8b as well); J.M. Hicks, 'The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)', *ResQ* 33 (1991), pp. 209-213; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 869.

8. So Bultmann, *History*, p. 175; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 213; Grässer, *Parusieverzögerung*, p. 36; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1176-77 (belongs better after 17.36); Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 127 (position due to Luke, but possibly from Jesus' mouth); C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 639; Goulder, *Luke*, pp. 658-64.

application of the parable.[9] Lukan origin is also doubtful on the grounds that Luke does not ordinarily compose Son of Man sayings. Given these two arguments, nothing precludes the saying originating from the historical Jesus, although possibly it arose from a different context. In this case, v. 8b would be an authentic part of the Jesus tradition that was added here by either Luke or the pre-Lukan tradition.[10]

Regarding the background to our parable, there are some points of similarity to Sir. 35.15-19, where God does not ignore the cries of the widow but dispenses swift vengeance upon the oppressor. But there are also differences between the two texts. Therefore, rather than argue for a conscious borrowing,[11] it would seem more likely that Jesus drew on a common Old Testament symbol of oppression and linked it with a contemporary propensity for judges to be less than honourable.

This introduces the setting of the parable. Although there does not appear to have been a uniform judicial system operating in Israel at the time,[12] it is clear that in a small town or village local people of prominence were appointed to act as required.[13] In New Testament times

9. So Delling, 'Gottlosen Richter', p. 22; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 670-71; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 273. See also Catchpole, 'Search', pp. 2-8, who shows that vv. 2-8 exhibit features that are common to μακροθυμία passages, and thus should be maintained as a unity. However, Catchpole's model breaks down in that in this parable there is no real parallel to the sinful failure of God's people and the re-establishment of a broken relationship.

10. Admittedly, it would appear strange that such a saying was added here, when more appropriate locations in the tradition were available (e.g. after Lk. 21.35). This would tend to favour its originality in this context. It is also unlikely that Luke composed both v. 1 and v. 8b, although perhaps it is an overstatement to argue that the two verses go in opposite directions. Luke may have understood the focus of persistent prayer to be directed at eschatological vindication (so Nolland, *Luke*, p. 871), and its need arising from faithfulness.

11. As do Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 128; Goulder, *Luke*, p. 659. (Rengstorf, *Lukas*, p. 206—'possibly').

12. The ideal reflected in the Mishnah (*m. Sanh.* 3.1) was for three judges to preside over a civil dispute.

13. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 153, who feels that the parable reflects a monetary case, which would have been decided by a single judge (*b. Sanh.* 5a); J.D.M. Derrett, 'Law in the New Testament: The Parable of the Unjust Judge', *NTS* 18 (1971), pp. 180-81; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 672. Derrett proposes that there were two court systems: secular and religious. The woman had bypassed the Jewish court and opted for Gentile jurisdiction. Herzog (*Subversive Speech*, p. 221) argues, against Derrett, that a Hellenistic court would not reflect the widow's privileged position as stated

some judges were so corrupt they were described as *robber judges*, willing to pervert justice for a dish of meat.[14] It is to such a judge that the widow brings her petition.

2. *Analysis*

In contrast to the rabbinic injunction to limit prayer so as not to weary God,[15] Luke stresses the need for Christian disciples to be busy at prayer (v. 1). Rather than fall victim to fear,[16] or lose heart[17] over a delayed answer, the believer must persist. Exactly what they should be praying for, however, is unclear at this stage. I shall discuss this in due course, together with the allegation that the Lukan introduction misses the main point of the parable.

The parable first of all introduces a local judge of dubious character, who neither fears God nor respects his fellow human beings.[18] The present participles highlight his habitual characteristics. φοβέομαι is often used in the context of God as judge,[19] and here raises the ironical situation of a judge who has no reverence for the true judge. This contrasts with the injunction of King Jehoshaphat when he established the local judiciary in the towns of Judah (2 Chron. 19.4-6). In Old Testament tradition, the one who has no fear of God is neither pious (Ps. 14.4; 21.23; 24.12; 32.18) nor wise (Prov. 1.7).

ἐντρέπομαι in the middle voice means *to respect*, though it is unclear whether the negative use indicates a lack of concern for others,[20] or an indifference to people's opinions of him (i.e. a lack of a sense of shame),[21] or both.[22] In all the uses of this form in the New Testament,

in the Torah. Furthermore, the mention of the judge fearing God suggests a Jewish setting. Such details are, however, not crucial to the interpretation of the parable.

14. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 131.

15. See the discussion in Chapter 15, Section 2e, below.

16. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 130.

17. The verb μὴ ἐγκακεῖν is used several times in the Pauline epistles in the same sense (2 Cor. 4.1, 16; Gal. 6.9; Eph. 3.13; 2 Thess. 3.13).

18. Compare the description of King Jehoiakim given by Josephus (*Ant.* 10.5.2). Also see Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Rom. Ant.* 10.10.7, with regard to certain men of prominence, 'neither fearing divine wrath nor respecting human fate'.

19. See Delling, 'Gottlosen Richter', p. 7 n. 26.

20. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 869.

21. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 153; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 132-33; Johnson, *Luke*, p. 269.

there is a sense of submission to the authority of someone, with a corollary of carrying out that person's instructions.[23] In this case, while the judge holds a position of authority, he is accountable to the community as a whole to administer fair and equitable judgment. As such, the community has authority over him. A judge who has no respect for people, therefore, is one who not only lacks concern for them, but has little sense of accountability to them. Consequently, he is indifferent to their opinions of him.[24] This understanding is important, as it impinges on the interpretation of ὑπωπιάζω in v. 5.

The other character in the story is a widow. Widows are commonly depicted in the Old Testament as objects of oppression and exploitation, but those for whom God demands special care. To care for the widow is a mark of loyalty to the covenant (Exod. 22.21-24; Deut. 10.18; 27.19; Ps. 68.5; Isa. 1.17, 23; Mal. 3.5).[25] Widows were still being exploited in the time of Jesus (Mk 12.40), and among the marginalized members of society for whom Luke shows special concern.[26]

The woman sought justice from the judge, with the iterative imperfect ἤρχετο (v. 3) signifying her repeated efforts to convince him to take up her case. Ordinarily, women in the Middle East did not go to court. It would appear, then, that the woman was alone and had nobody to assist her.[27] The case probably involved monetary compensation,[28] though such details are irrelevant to the story.

22. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 179-80.

23. Lk. 20.13 par. (which is translated in the sense of feeling shame in the Arabic and Syriac versions—see Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 132); Heb. 12.9; cf. *1 Clem.* 21.6; Ignatius, *Magn.* 6.2; *Trall.* 3.1, 2; *Smyrn.* 8.1. Given this lexical sense, ἐντρέπομαι does not mean that the judge is impartial, thus portraying him in a positive light (against Derrett, 'Unjust Judge', p. 191).

24. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 132) notes the important role of pride and shame in Middle Eastern culture. To feel no shame is a very negative characteristic indeed.

25. That the widow was a standing symbol for the needy is evidenced by the LXX of Jer. 5.28, where אביונם is translated with χήρα. For the care of widows in the Mishnaic legislation see *m. Ket.* 4.12; 11.1-6; 12.3-4; *m. Giṭ.* 5.3.

26. Note the prominence of widows in Luke–Acts (Lk. 2.37; 4.25-26; 7.12; 20.47; 21.2-3; Acts 6.1; 9.39, 41).

27. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 135), who points out that in a patriarchal society such as this women could get away with more than men, for they would not be publicly mistreated.

28. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 412; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 153; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 672. According to the Talmud, a qualified scholar could adjudicate alone on monetary matters (*b. Sanh.* 5a).

The imperfect ἤθελεν (v.4) corresponds to ἤρχετο. The woman's persistence met with continual refusal. No concrete reason for the judge's behaviour is given besides his obdurate character, though it may be that the woman had paid no bribes,[29] that she had an influential opponent,[30] or that he was simply lazy.[31] The narrative, in fact, is quite condensed, which leads the hearer to view the judge as the actual opponent of the woman.[32]

Nevertheless, the reader is prepared for some future development by the use of ἐπὶ χρόνον, which is picked up in turn by μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα (v. 4b). The judge eventually has a change of mind, with the audience privy to his reasoning via the narrative device of soliloquy.

The conditional construction (εἰ καὶ...) repeats in the first person what has already been stated about his character. The judge admits it, and is totally unconcerned! However, he finally agrees to help the woman, not because of a change of character,[33] but because he wants to be rid of her constant[34] pestering.[35]

The alternative is expressed by the ἵνα clause, with the verb ὑπωπιάζω (*to give a black eye*) employing a metaphor drawn from the boxing ring (cf. 1 Cor. 9.27).[36] However, it is unlikely that the judge feared actual physical assault.[37] Accordingly, there have been numerous

29. Manson, *Sayings*, p. 306.

30. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 153.

31. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 672.

32. Scott, *Hear*, p. 183.

33. Scott (*Hear*, p. 186) calls this *defamiliarization*, for while the audience expect the widow to receive help, they expect the judge to act out of a sense of honour.

34. The question arises as to grammatical function of εἰς τέλος. Does it belong with the participle, giving the sense of *continually* (Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 136; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 638), or with the main verb giving the sense of *completely* (BDF, 'Τέλος', p. 112; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 154) or *finally* (BAGD, p. 819; Delling, *TDNT*, VIII, p. 56). In the end, however, the sense is governed more by how one understands ὑπωπιάζω.

35. Note the similar wording in the parable of the Friend at Midnight (διὰ γε τὸ παρέχειν μοι κόπον (18.5)—μή μοι κόπους πάρεχε (11.7).

36. Weiss, 'ὑποπιάζω', *TDNT*, VIII, p. 590-91. See also Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.11.15; Diogenes Laertius 6.39.

37. Against C. Spicq, 'La parabole de la veuve obstinée et du juge inerte, aux décisions impromptues (Lc. xviii, 1-8)', *RB* 68 (1961), p. 75 n. 6; D. Daube, 'Neglected Nuances of Exposition in Luke–Acts', in *ANRW* 2/25.3 (1984),

suggestions as to the precise nuance of the term here. The most common suggestion is that the word is used with a weakened metaphorical meaning, giving the sense of *wearing him out*.[38] Bailey, following the Arabic version, suggests the meaning of *being given a headache*.[39] Based on a later use of the word and a common Oriental expression, Derrett proposes that the meaning is *blacken my face*, that is, a loss of prestige thus incurring shame and dishonour.[40] But although this accords with a possible rendering of ἀναίδεια in the similar parable of the Friend at Midnight (11.8),[41] it does not correspond with the sense of ἐντρέπομαι given above.[42] The judge cannot be afraid of losing a sense of shame that he does not have! It is unlikely that ὑπωπιάζω means *annoy*,[43] for he was already annoyed. However, the word may carry its literal meaning of *blacken the eye*, but be meant in a humorous or sarcastic sense.[44]

Jesus then directs his hearers' attention to the lesson to be learnt from the unjust[45] judge, with Luke's use of the post-resurrection title ὁ κύριος adding authority to the pronouncement (v. 6). The parable is then applied by means of a rhetorical question that argues *a fortiori*, with the emphatic negative future employed to accentuate the situation.

pp. 2339-40; Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse*, p. 72.

38. BDF, p. 112; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 154; Linnemann, *Parables*, p. 120; Freed, 'Judge and the Widow', p. 50; Scott, *Hear*, p. 185; Blomberg, *Parables*, p. 272. Lenski (*St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 894) argues that it means *to wear him down* (i.e. so that he will give in). However, this has already been accomplished.

39. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 136.

40. Derrett, 'Unjust Judge', pp. 188-91, followed by Marshall, *Luke*, p. 673; Hicks, 'Persistent Widow', pp. 217-18; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 868.

41. See the discussion on this parable, above.

42. Derrett overcomes this by his unlikely interpretation of ἐντρέπομαι. See n. 23, above.

43. As proposed by Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 413.

44. W. Harnisch ('Die Ironie als Stilmittel in Gleichnissen Jesu', *EvT* 32 [1972], pp. 432-33) sees it as ironical. The irony is that a man of such authority can be manipulated by the need to protect his face. Delling ('Gottlosen Richter', pp. 12-13) and Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 270 n. 139) both believe that the judge is being sarcastic. Delling supports his interpretation by arguing that ἐρχομένη refers to a single coming. While this is not strictly forbidden by the use of the present participle, it is unlikely given the context.

45. τῆς ἀδικίας should be taken as a descriptive genitive. The judge is unjust because he failed to fulfil his legal obligation to the widow. Even in his change of mind he acted for his own benefit.

If an unsympathetic judge will eventually grant justice to a widow, how much more will God grant justice[46] to his people[47] who consistently petition him.

The expression καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς (v. 7b) is notoriously difficult.[48] There are three interrelated issues: 1) whether v. 7b is a separate rhetorical question, or a statement; 2) the meaning of μακροθυμέω in this context; and 3) the focus of ἐπ' αὐτοῖς.

Most tend to regard the clause as a concessive statement, with μακροθυμέω having the sense of *delay*. This, then, refers to the apparent time that God takes in answering the petitions of his elect.[49]

A second option is to understand it as a separate question, answered by v. 8a, with μακροθυμέω having the same sense as that above. God will not delay in answering his elect but will vindicate them quickly.[50] In this sense, God's action is contrasted to the judge's inaction.

A third alternative is to take v. 7b as a question expecting a negative reply, with ἐπ' αὐτοῖς referring to the oppressors of the elect and μακροθυμέω retaining its normal sense of *patience*. Thus, God will not

46. ἐκδίκησις was a technical term in the Hellenistic world for administrative justice (see Derrett, 'Unjust Judge', p. 186). It carries the thought of either punishing offenders (*T. Levi* 3.3; cf. Rev. 6.9), or rescuing those (especially the elect) from trouble (*T. Sol.* 22.4; Acts 7.24). The latter is primarily the thought here, with no explicit mention of vengeance. However, this depends on how the enigmatic v. 7b is understood.

47. τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν employs Old Testament covenant imagery. Luke only uses this term elsewhere of Jesus in his Gospel (23.35), though he does use election terminology for believers in Acts 13.48. See Nolland, *Luke*, p. 869.

48. D.C. Benjamin ('The Persistent Widow', *BibTod* 28 [1990], p. 217) suggests that in vv. 7b-8a the subject shifts to the judge. But this is extremely forced.

49. With various nuances, Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 414; Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 154-55 (who sees an underlying Aramaic stative clause which is concessive in force); Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, pp. 896-97; H. Riesenfeld, 'Zu μακροθυμειν (Lk 18,7)', in J. Binder *et al.* (eds.), *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1963), pp. 214-17; A. Wifstrand, 'Lukas xviii.7', *NTS* 11 (1964–65), pp. 72-74; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 675; Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse*, pp. 72-73; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 639; Hicks, 'Persistent Widow', pp. 219-21.

50. B.B. Warfield, 'The Importunate Widow and the Alleged Failure of Faith', *ExpTim* 25 (1913–14), p. 71; H. Ljungvik, 'Zur Erklärung einer Lukas-Stelle (Lk. xviii.7)', *NTS* 10 (1963–64), pp. 289-94; Hendriksen, *Luke*, pp. 817-19; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 494; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1177; Paulsen, 'Die Witwe', pp. 30-31; Freed, 'Judge and the Widow', pp. 53-54.

delay in executing wrath upon the oppressors.[51]

A final approach is to take μακροθυμέω in the sense of *patience*, making a statement to the effect that God holds back his anger from the elect (who are sinners), thereby allowing them to approach him in prayer.[52]

In assessing the above options, it appears that they all give rise to some difficulties. The first option conflicts with ἐν τάχει (v. 8a) and posits a sense for μακροθυμέω that lies outside its normal biblical use. The second encounters the same problem with the verb and, in addition, belies actual experience. The third option introduces the theme of the oppressors, who have no part in this context. ἐπ' αὐτοῖς most naturally refers to the elect. The final approach is simply not a New Testament concept. Nowhere is it indicated that God must push aside his wrath in order to listen to the prayers of his people.

In seeking another interpretation to those offered above, it should be noted that the verb and the cognate noun are normally used in the New Testament of God holding back his wrath.[53] The most natural sense would be, therefore, that God is not angry about the constant petitions presented to him.[54] This both contrasts with the attitude of the judge, and reinforces Jesus's teaching elsewhere about the approachability of God (Lk. 11.9-13).

λέγω ὑμῖν (v. 8a) captures the attention of the audience in order to emphasize the point. God will vindicate his people speedily. On the surface, this appears to contradict reality, as well as posing difficulties for the first option discussed above.[55] In responding to this difficulty,

51. So Godet, *St. Luke*, II, p. 202; C.E.B. Cranfield, 'The Parable of the Unjust Judge and the Eschatology of Luke–Acts', *SJT* 16 (1963), p. 300. This could be the sense of Sir. 35.19 though the verse is somewhat ambiguous. Manson (*Sayings*, pp. 307-308) expects a positive reply. God will punish the oppressors but not immediately.

52. So Horst, 'μακροθυμία', *TDNT*, IV, p. 381; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 139; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 870.

53. Rom. 2.4; 9.22; 1 Pet. 3.20; 2 Pet. 3.9, 15; cf. LXX of Prov. 19.11; Job 7.16; Sir. 2.4. Catchpole ('Search', pp. 92-98) amasses enough evidence to show that in the context of God's people it refers to long suffering rather than delay.

54. So Ellis, *Luke*, p. 214; Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, p. 225.

55. This difficulty is usually countered by reference to a difference in perspectives. From the human standpoint there is a delay, but God's perspective is different (so Marshall, *Luke*, p. 676). Nolland (*Luke*, p. 870) takes a different line in proposing that Luke possibly inverted the order of v. 7 and v. 8a. The latter relates to

two questions need to be answered concerning ἐν τάχει. The first is its meaning. In the context of facilitating a contrast between God and the judge, *soon* is more appropriate than *suddenly*.[56] The second question relates to the precise time of this vindication; that is, whether the parable promises historical or eschatological action.[57] The answer to this depends on the focus of the prayers of the elect. If they are petitions concerned with their affliction and rejection by those outside the Christian community,[58] the answer may well be both.[59] However, if the petitions relate to the final inbreaking of the kingdom the answer is self-evident.

In any event, we still must explain the apparent contradiction with reality. God does not always grant justice to his people speedily within history, and, in hindsight, the eschaton certainly was not imminent for the original audience. The problem may be overcome if ἐν τάχει is seen to relate to God's *concern*, rather than the time of his final action.

judgment on the oppressors. However, as discussed above, this introduces a foreign element into the story. Godet (*St. Luke*, II, p. 202) and Geldenhuys (*Luke*, p. 448) suggest that God acts quickly *after* his μακροθυμία. This appears too convenient.

56. Against F. Horst, 'υακροθξωα', *TDNT*, IV, p. 381; Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 155; Spicq, 'Lc xviii,1-8', p. 81; Grässer, *Parusieverzögerung*, p. 38; Hicks, 'Persistent Widow', pp. 220-21.

57. A.J. Mattill Jr (*Luke and the Last Things: A Perspective for the Understanding of Lukan Thought* [Dillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1979], pp. 89-96) and Nolland (*Luke*, p. 869) favour the eschaton, whereas Marshall (*Luke*, p. 674) believes both are in view. Bailey (*Peasant Eyes*, p. 140) feels that here there could be an implicit reference to the resurrection as a soon-to-be-evidenced vindication of Jesus and his followers. But there is nothing in the context to warrant this. Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, pp. 271-73) considers that the petitions relate to the arrival of the kingdom. Consequently, because of the inauguration of the kingdom in the person and work of Jesus, vindication can truly be designated as *quick*. However, the context suggests that we are not dealing with the inauguration of the kingdom.

58. So Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 156-57; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 213; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 671; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 130; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 127. J.M. Ford (*My Enemy is My Guest: Jesus and Violence in Luke* [New York: Orbis Books, 1984], pp. 106-107) believes that the parable may have originally been addressed to zealots, who are exhorted by Jesus to wait for God's vindication.

59. D. Wenham (*Parables*, pp. 189-90) points out that in a sense, prayer for personal vindication is one with a request for the arrival of the kingdom, for both relate to the personal intervention of God. However, while this may be true in some instances, God may still vindicate his people during history.

Here we find a contrast to the uncaring judge, who showed no concern at all for the widow. God, on the other hand, shows immediate concern, quickly setting in motion the vindication of his people.

πλὴν (v. 8b) is a strong adversative that introduces a rhetorical question expecting a negative reply. In this sense, the interrogative particle ἆρα is intended by Luke as an exhortation to the community he addresses to remain prayerful.[60] The point is that Jesus is pessimistic regarding finding people of faith when he returns. This does appear somewhat artificial in this context,[61] though this depends largely on the precise focus of τὴν πίστιν. In another context, the reference could be to the Christian message in general.[62] Taken in the present context the reference will be to faithfulness in prayer. Specifically, it may refer to persistence in prayer in the midst of affliction,[63] confident of God's intervention.[64]

3. *Interpretation*

The parable of the Judge and the Widow makes two main points, each of which comes from one of the characters in the story. These points are tightly interwoven, with the first dependent upon the second.[65]

60. Freed ('Judge and the Widow', pp. 56-57) argues that at this point Luke was uncertain about the reality of faith in the community, but by the time of the writing of Acts he had a far more positive outlook, picturing the early church in constant prayer (for instance, 1.14; 2.42; 6.6; 9.11). It is preferable, however, to see the particle as a rhetorical device.

61. See the discussion in the introduction to this parable. Note J.A. Robertson, 'The Parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke xviii.1-8)', *ExpTim* 38 (1926–27), p. 392, who sees v. 8 as a mistranslation from an original Aramaic conditional question expecting a negative reply (i.e. *If he vindicates quickly, will he find faith...?*). The point is that delay breeds faith. Such a proposal must remain conjectural.

62. So Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 224; Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 280.

63. So Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 157; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 348; Linnemann, *Parables*, pp. 121-22; Benjamin, 'Persistent Widow', pp. 217-18.

64. Meecham, 'Unjust Judge', pp. 306-307; Delling, 'Gottlosen Richter', pp. 22-25.

65. This is the major weakness of the proposal of D.O. Via, 'The Parable of the Unjust Judge: A Metaphor of the Unrealised Self', in D. Patte (ed.), *Semiology and Parables: An Exploration of the Possibilities Offered by Structuralism for Exegesis* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1976), pp. 1-32, who offers an interpretation of the parable along the lines indicated by the title of his article. But as Nolland (*Luke*,

The first point, from the widow, relates to the need for persistence in prayer. This need is emphasized by the Lukan introduction (v. 1), the present participle τῶν βοώντων and the hyperbolic ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός (v. 7a). This, in turn, echoes a concern for prayer that is dominant in Luke–Acts.[66] For Luke, the parable exhorts believers to prayerfulness for two reasons: to be vindicated by God (vv. 7-8a) and to be found to be faithful (v. 8b). Perhaps this implies a setting of rejection and affliction (cf. Mt. 10.16-24; 24.9-13, 16-22; Lk. 21.12-17; Acts 5.21-42; 14.22),[67] though it is equally possible that Luke understood the parable to relate to prayer in a more general sense.

The value of persistence in prayer is ultimately dependent upon the second point, which comes from the judge. Persistence is not in vain because of the character of God.[68] Arguing *a fortiori* the parable shows that if a judge of dubious character will eventually grant the request of a widow, how much more will a loving and sovereign God vindicate his people?[69] On the other hand, two contrasts are made between God and

p. 866) observes, this fails to appreciate that the parable works on the basis of the judge's relationship with the widow, not on an analysis of his psyche. (Hence the parable is about God's relationship with people, not an analysis of God's character for its own sake.)

66. Lk. 1.10; 2.37; 3.21; 5.16; 6.12; 9.18, 28-29; 11.1; 22.40-46; 23.34; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 3.1; 6.4, 6; 8.15-17; 10.4, 9, 30-31; 12.5, 12; 13.1-3; 16.13, 16, 25; 20.36; 21.5; 22.17; 28.8. For a discussion of the motif of prayer in Luke–Acts, including the relationship between Luke, Matthew, Mark and Paul in this regard, see Ott, *Gebet und Heil*. See also the discussion on prayer in Chapter 13, Section 4, below, and the literature cited in the accompanying notes.

67. Delling ('Gottlosen Richter', pp. 22-23) believes that the parable was originally addressed to a pious group of Palestinian Jews, who waited for a Son of Man to vindicate them from persecution. Herzog (*Subversive Speech*, pp. 215-32), following his social analysis of the parables, proposes an original setting vastly different to that indicated by the Lukan context. He believes that the parable is designed to expose a discrepancy in the justice system between the Torah ideal and its contemporary wilful misinterpretation. The judge is following an interpretation of the Torah designed to favour the ruling-class elite, while the widow is an oppressed woman who dares to challenge the unjust system. This is an interesting proposal, though its viability depends upon the assumption that the behaviour of the judge represents the contemporary norm. It should also be stressed that this interpretation is not mutually exclusive to that given in the Lukan context.

68. A point noted by Weder (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 273), who curiously rejects the relevance of v. 1 (p. 270).

69. Binder (*Richter*, pp. 74-92) treats the parable not in terms of an *a fortiori*

the judge. First, unlike the judge, God is patient with the requests of the elect (v. 7b). This underlines God's concern and approachability, and contrasts any view of limiting prayer so as not to weary God.[70] Second, God does not have to be coaxed into action. He will act swiftly.

The parable also impinges upon the issue of a delayed parousia. However, although there is certainly an intervening period envisaged,[71] the conclusion of the parable makes it clear that the need for persistence is based on the reality of the parousia (cf. 17.22-37; 19.11-27). Here the parable makes a link between prayer, faithfulness and the parousia similar to that made in 21.36.[72] Indeed, if ἐν τάχει (v. 8a) relates to the eschaton,[73] then Luke is emphasizing[74] that the apparent delay is short, thus keeping alive the hope of an imminent end.

argument, but as a direct allegory. For Binder, the parable reflects a conflict situation between Jesus and his disciples, with the latter seeking vindication from trouble and affliction. Jesus places himself in the parable as the judge, with v. 2 and v. 5 being ironical comments designed to challenge his followers to put their trust in him. However, Binder's proposal is not convincing, for there is no evidence for such a conflict in the Gospel accounts. (Binder cites the betrayal by Judas, but Judas's attitude is nowhere presented as representative of the wider group.) The parable makes more sense in the setting given by Luke, a setting which is not implausible given Lk. 11.1-13; 22.29-46.

70. This is discussed further in Chapter 15, Section 2e, below.

71. Blomberg (*Parables*, p. 272) notes that this does not necessarily indicate a later Christian setting, for the Jews were also familiar with a delay regarding a vindication of their cause by God.

72. Grässer (*Parusieverzögerung*, pp. 37-38) argues that the parousia is delayed *because of* the unfaithfulness of Christians. However, the focus is on the reality of the parousia, not its delay. See Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 151 n. 98.

73. So Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 128.

74. All the more so if Luke is responsible for the origin or placement of this verse.

Chapter 12

THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX-COLLECTOR (18.9-14)

1. *Introduction*

The parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector is an example story that employs two characters, one a positive and the other a negative example. While at a literary level the parable is linked to 18.1-8 via the theme of prayer and the use of the δικαι- word group, the teaching is entirely unrelated. In fact, it is more appropriate to view 18.9-14 as the beginning of a new section dealing with qualifications for entering the kingdom. 18.9-14 deals with humility, 18.15-17 shows the need for childlike faith, while 18.18–19.10 contains three illustrations: the rich ruler as a negative illustration of the dangers of wealth (18.18-30), and Bartimaeus (18.35-43) and Zacchaeus (19.1-10) as positive illustrations of faith and repentance respectively.[1]

The authenticity of the parable has generally been accepted,[2] although v. 9 is clearly a Lukan introduction to the parable,[3] and v. 14b a secondary application drawn from other strands of the tradition.

1. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 677. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 874) and J. Kodell ('Luke and the Children: The Beginning and End of the Great Interpolation [Luke 9:46-56; 18:9-23]', *CBQ* 49 [1987], pp. 423-27) do not include 18.35–19.10 in this schema. Kodell also notes how the Pharisee and the rich ruler, and the tax-collector and the children, form exemplary pairs.

2. The characteristic exceptions are Drury, *Parables*, p. 130; Goulder, *Luke*, pp. 667-70. L. Schottroff ('Die Erzählung vom Pharisäer und Zöllner als Beispiel für die theologische Kunst des Überredens', in H.D. Betz and L. Schottroff [eds.], *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz* [Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973], pp. 443-46) raises the possibility, but remains non-committal.

3. So J. Jeremias, *Die Sprache des Lukasevangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), pp. 272-73; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1183; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 874.

2. *Analysis*

Luke first of all prefaces the parable with an introduction (cf. 18.1; 19.11), indicating that its purpose is to address those who trust in their own righteousness. It is unlikely that he is solely targeting Pharisees;[4] rather, he is addressing all those who reflect the spirit of the Pharisee in the parable. As Horn states, 'Luke has certainly composed the introduction with view to the parable, but nevertheless biased by the experience of a particular church problem'.[5] Nevertheless, while the introduction shows how Luke understood the parable, in effect it robs it of its cutting edge, for it prejudges the prayer of the Pharisee. Whereas the reader of Luke's Gospel has accumulated a rather negative portrayal of the Pharisees by this stage (5.17-26; 5.30; 6.2, 7; 7.30, 39; 11.37-46, 53-54; 12.1; 15.1-2; 16.14-15), and thus would probably interpret the prayer negatively, it is likely that the original audience of Jesus would have been quite shocked by the concluding pronouncement (v. 14a). This will be considered in due course.

ὅτι (v. 9) is ambiguous, though given v. 14, it more likely means *that*, expressing the focus of self-confidence,[6] rather than *because*, indicating the basis for such confidence.[7] δίκαιοι contrasts with ἄδικοι (v. 11), and should be taken in the sense of a lifestyle that makes one acceptable before God.[8] Coupled with a high opinion of themselves, such people have a distaste of others. In Jesus' setting, τοὺς λοιποὺς would represent the Pharisaical attitude to 'sinners' (cf. 5.30; 15.1-2), while for Luke the term would have a broader identity.

The parable begins by depicting two men, one from each end of the religio-social hierarchy, going up to the temple to pray. Most interpreters see this in terms of private prayer, which an individual could

4. Against Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 139; Hunter, *Interpreting*, p. 102; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 496; Hendriksen, *Luke*, p. 818; Johnson, *Luke*, p. 271.

5. 'Lk hat die Einleitung zwar mit Blick auf die Parabel, aber doch vereinseitigend aus der Erfahrung konkreter Gemeindeprobleme gebildet' (Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 207). See also Heininger, *Metaphorik*, p. 209.

6. So Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 224; Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 899; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 207; Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 296; Goulder, *Luke*, p. 669.

7. As do Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 139 n. 38; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 150.

8. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 679.

engage in at any time. Bailey, however, argues persuasively that the setting is public worship, which consisted of a twice daily atonement sacrifice, with private prayer held at the time of the offering of incense (Lk. 1.10; cf. Sir. 50.19).[9] If this setting is correct, it would serve to underline the tax-collector's plea for atonement (v. 13).

For the original audience, the Pharisee would be a representation of the religious ideal: pious and devout, and rigorous in observing both the written and oral law (cf. Josephus, *War* 1.5.2). Tax-collectors, on the other hand, were universally despised (5.30; 7.34; 15.1). Not only were they considered traitors because of their collaboration with the Gentiles, they were often dishonest.[10] However, as mentioned above, the reader of Luke's Gospel has, by this time, quite different notions regarding the Pharisees. The same applies to tax-collectors, who are constantly portrayed as open to Jesus and his message (5.27-30; 7.34; 15.1; cf. 3.12).[11] Thus it is important to observe that Luke's readers have a very different estimation of the pair than did the original audience. Because of this, the outcome of the parable is considerably more shocking in its original setting.

The Pharisee assumes the normal standing posture for prayer (cf. 1 Sam. 1.26; 1 Kgs 8.14, 22; Mt. 6.5; Mk 11.25), though it is unclear whether πρὸς ἑαυτὸν (v. 11) belongs with the participle or the main verb.[12] If the latter, the sense would be that he either prayed silently,[13]

9. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 145-47.

10. See J.R. Donahue, 'Tax Collectors and Sinners: An Attempt at Identification', *CBQ* 33 (1971), pp. 39-61, who shows that tax-collectors did not collect direct state taxes (this was the function of government officials) but indirect taxes (tariffs, tolls, etc.), a system that was open to abuse and extortion. It was the latter group who were universally despised. In this regard, see also Herzog, *Subversive Speech*, pp. 187-89.

11. See Schottroff, 'Pharisäer und Zöllner', pp. 453-55; and J. Frickel, 'Die Zöllner, Vorbild der Demut und Wahrer Gottesverehung', in E. Dassmann and K.S. Frank (eds.), *Pietas* (JAC, 8; Münster: Aschendorff, 1980), pp. 369-80, who show how, by the time of the written Gospels, tax-collectors typified the humble and repentant, and were thus used as models of piety.

12. The matter is complicated by textual variants. P^{75} B T Θ Ψ read ταῦτα πρὸς ἑαυτόν, thus giving the latter sense.

13. So Godet, *St. Luke*, II, p. 204; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 452; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 208; Tiede, *Luke*, p. 307; Goulder, *Luke*, p. 669. Plummer (*St. Luke*, pp. 416-17) contends that the content of his prayer indicates that he would not wish to be heard. However, one could argue precisely the reverse! Note that Jewish practice was to pray aloud, though not loudly.

prayed about himself,[14] or prayed ostensibly to God.[15] If the former, the sense would either be that he simply stood (an Aramaism meaning to *take one's stand*),[16] or that he stood aloof because of his self-righteousness (an attitude condemned by Rabbi Hillel [*m. Ab.* 2.5]).[17] This latter meaning is linguistically doubtful,[18] though it does facilitate a contrast with the attitude of the tax-collector.

As was the custom, the prayer of the Pharisee begins with thanksgiving, though his thanksgiving is centred upon himself. First, he thanks God for what he does not do. He is no swindler (ἅρπαξ), rogue (ἄδικος), adulterer (μοιχός), or tax-collector (τελώνης). οὗτος not only makes an identification with the particular tax-collector who was with him in the temple, it has a derogatory ring. Even if the first two terms are not directed at the tax-collector,[19] the Pharisee certainly puts him on a par with them.

Next, the Pharisee stresses what he does do (v. 12), giving two examples of his religious piety. He fasts twice a week and tithes everything.[20] A national fast was prescribed for the Day of Atonement, and possibly other days in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem (Zech. 7.3, 5; 8.19), though it is uncertain to what degree the latter were observed. In addition, fasts were held in times of distress or calamity, and an individual could fast at other times as a mark of religious piety (Lk. 2.37). The Pharisees fasted on Mondays and Thursdays (*Did.* 8.1; cf. Lk. 5.33), probably nothing to do with the days that Moses was considered to have ascended and descended Mount Sinai (*b. Ta'an.* 10a, 12a), but rather to keep maximum distance from the sabbath and optimum distance from each other.[21] Tithing was normally confined to

14. So Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 900; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1186; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 876.

15. So Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 350; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 496; Hendriksen, *Luke*, pp. 819, 824; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 643.

16. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 140; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 679.

17. So Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 147-49; Borsch, *Many Things*, p. 28; Herzog, *Subversive Speech*, p. 185.

18. Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 416, who argues that such a meaning would be represented by καθ' ἑαυτόν (as witnessed by codex Bezae); Nolland, *Luke*, p. 876.

19. As argued by Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 150-52.

20. Contrast Ps. 35.13 (cf. Mt. 6.16-18), where fasting should be accompanied by humility.

21. So Str–B, II, pp. 241-44; IV, pp. 77-114. See also A. Edersheim, *The Life*

agricultural products (Deut. 14.22-23), but wider tithing was beginning to appear (*m. Ma'as.* 1.1-5.8; *m. Šeb.* 9.1; cf. Lk. 11.42). The Pharisee is, therefore, at pains to point out that by his regular fasting, and tithing of all that he has acquired (ὅσα κτῶμαι), he has exceeded the demands of the law.

How then should we understand the prayer of the Pharisee? There are a number of different suggestions. Some consider the prayer to be fairly typical of the Pharisaical attitude. It represents a righteousness built on law, and a piety that manifests itself in an aloof attitude to others, with a parallel often drawn with similar prayers found in *b. Ber.* 28b and *b. Suk.* 45b (cf. 1QH 7.34; Phil. 3.4-6).[22] In this view, Jesus is openly rebuking the Pharisaical notion of religious piety.

Another proposal has been offered by Schottroff, who views the prayer as a deliberate caricature. She argues that no Pharisee would ever have recognized himself in the prayer, and consequently the audience would immediately have identified with the tax-collector.[23] How-

and Times of Jesus the Messiah (London: Longmans, Green, 1900), II, p. 291; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135)* (ed. and rev. G. Vermes *et al.*; T. & T. Clark: Edinburgh, 1987), II, pp. 483-84; J. Behm, 'νῆστις, νηστεύω, νηστεία',
\\\ *TDNT*, IV, pp. 924-35; F. Böhl, 'Das Fasten an Montagen und Donnerstagen: Zur Geschichte einer pharisäischen Praxis (Lk 18,12)', *BZ* 31 (1987), pp. 247-50.

22. So Str–B, II, pp. 240-46; Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, pp. 898-902; Grundmann, *Lukas*, p. 350; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 677-79; Hendriksen, *Luke*, pp. 818-20; Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 150-52; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1184-85.

23. Schottroff, 'Pharisäer und Zöllner', pp. 448-53; followed by J.F. Wimmer, *Fasting in the New Testament* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982), pp. 80-81. Recent defences of this view include Neale, *Sinners*, pp. 172-76; F.G. Downing, 'The Ambiguity of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector in the Greco-Roman World of Late Antiquity', *CBQ* 54 (1992), pp. 80-99; F.C. Holmgren, 'The Pharisee and the Tax Collector: Luke 18:9-14 and Deuteronomy 26:1-5', *Int* 48 (1994), pp. 252-61. The latter two writers also regard the prayer of the tax-collector as a caricature. Holmgren believes that the Pharisee's prayer is grounded in the 'I have/I have not' liturgy of Deut. 26.12-15 (on the possible links to Deut. 26, see also C.A. Evans, 'The Pharisee and the Publican: Luke 18.9-14 and Deuteronomy 26', in C.A. Evans and W.R. Stenger [eds.], *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* [JSNTSup, 104; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994], pp. 342-55). Consequently, the Pharisee needs to acknowledge the grace of God as in the other part of the liturgy in vv. 5-10. The tax-collector, on the other hand, must not rely on the cheap grace of God, but needs to provide an action response. To view the Pharisee's prayer as a caricature naturally leads Schottroff ('Pharisäer und Zöllner', pp. 455-56) and Downing ('Pharisee

ever, Schottroff's arguments from extra-biblical sources are not convincing, nor is her contention that the prayer in *b. Ber.* 28b is fundamentally different to that of the Pharisee. In the end, this understanding of the Pharisee's prayer robs the parable of its cutting edge, for the outcome is immediately obvious to the audience.

As both the above options seem rather extreme,[24] some have suggested that the prayer should be seen as a genuine expression of thanks, in which the Pharisee is not attempting to be morally superior, and implicitly acknowledges the grace of God.[25] Although this view is eventually inadequate to explain the pronouncement of v. 14a, it is perhaps a good place to start. The prayer may begin, or be intended, as a genuine expression of thanks, but it ultimately discloses problems with the Pharisee's attitude. While all that he has stated is true, it is prayed in the wrong spirit. As Danker observes, 'This particular Pharisee is to be numbered among those who have a habit of being right in the wrong way'.[26] In fact, the key to the entire text is found in the reference that the Pharisee makes to the tax-collector. In restricting righteousness to his own methods, he has excluded the tax-collector from God's salvation.[27] Thus, while the Pharisee may wrongly have no sense of guilt, his definitive mistake is to look horizontally rather than vertically, thereby demonstrating that his ultimate worth is based on a comparison with others.[28] Seen in this way, the parable is not a blanket condemnation of

and the Tax-Collector', p. 84) to consider v. 14a as an editorial expansion by one who saw the parable as incomplete.

24. Note especially the questions that have been raised by E.P. Sanders regarding viewing the Pharisees in legalistic terms. This issue is discussed in Chapter 15, section 2c, below.

25. So, in one form or other, Borsch, *Many Things*, pp. 26-27; Scott, *Hear*, pp. 95-96; J. Schlosser, 'Le pharisien et le publicain (Lc 18,9-14)', in J. Delorme (ed.), *Les paraboles évangéliques: Perspectives nouvelles* (LD, 135; Paris: Cerf, 1989), pp. 281-85; Heininger, *Metaphorik*, p. 217; Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions*, p. 231.

26. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*, p. 297.

27. F. Schnider, 'Ausschliessen und ausgeschlossen werden: Beobachtungen zur Struktur des Gleichnisses vom Pharisäer und Zöllner (Lk 18,10-14a)', *BZ* 24 (1980), p. 47.

28. Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 224; Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 142-43; Schweizer, *Lukas*, p. 186; Linnemann, *Parables*, pp. 58-60; J.W. Holleran, 'The Saint and the Scoundrel', *BibTod* 25 (1987), pp. 375-76; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 643; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 876-77; J.J. Kilgallen, 'The Importance of the Redactor in Luke 18:9-14', *Bib* 79 (1998), pp. 69-75.

all Pharisees, or even of Pharisaical piety, but a rebuke against an attitude, an attitude that obviously existed in Pharisaical circles but was certainly not universal (see Rabbi Hillel's condemnation of such an attitude in *m. Ab.* 2.5).

In contrast, the tax-collector is a model of humility, offering his prayer in the spirit of Psalm 51.[29] μακρόθεν ἑστῶς (v. 13) probably indicates the extremities of the court of Israel,[30] and is designed to accentuate the man's lowly status and ritual impurity.[31] Thus both men stand apart for different reasons: the Pharisee to draw attention to himself and the tax-collector as a reflection of how he perceives his relationship to God.[32]

The tax-collector's contrition is emphasized first of all by οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπᾶραι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, which indicates a continually bowed head. This was not the normal posture for prayer (cf. Ps. 123.1; 1 Esd. 4.58; Mk 6.41; 7.34; Jn 11.41; 17.1)[33] and suggests great remorse. This remorse is then expressed by beating his chest, with the imperfect ἔτυπτεν being a graphic portrayal of his sorrow. Such action was a common expression of grief in the Old Testament (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.10.5; Homer, *Iliad* 18.30-31) and was often accompanied by wailing. The chest was beaten because it was seen as the seat of sin (*Eccl. R.* 7.2). Bailey comments that such action was normally only performed by women in the Middle East; for men it was an expression of supreme sorrow (cf. Lk. 23.48).[34]

In contrast to the prayer of the Pharisee, the tax-collector begs God for mercy, recognizing that he is a[35] sinner. ἱλάσθητί (cf. Heb. 2.17) is

29. Downing ('Pharisee and the Tax-Collector', pp. 80-99) maintains that the prayer of the tax-collector is also a caricature, for not only were prayers of self-abasement considered anomalous in the Greco-Roman world, from a Jewish perspective the prayer lacks confidence in the mercy of God. However, a cry to God for mercy must be based on some degree of hope and confidence in God's willingness to respond. Furthermore, the texts from the New Testament epistles that Downing cites as evidence of the need to approach God confidently are surely out of place here.

30. Str–B, II, p. 246; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 680.

31. Donahue, *Parables*, p. 189; Herzog, *Subversive Speech*, p. 185.

32. S. Schmitz, 'Psychologische Hilfen zum Verstehen biblischer Texte? Zum Beispiel Lk 18,9-14', *BK* 38 (1983), p. 117.

33. Against Str–B, II, pp. 246-47.

34. Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 153.

35. Plummer (*St. Luke*, p. 419) and Lenski (*St. Luke's Gospel*, pp. 902-903)

to make atonement; the normal translation *be merciful* is too weak.[36] The idea is either propitiation[37] or expiation,[38] depending on whether the focus is on averting God's wrath or making payment for sin, although if this prayer is made in connection with the daily sin offering,[39] it is difficult to avoid both suggestions.

λέγω ὑμῖν (v. 14) typically introduces a pronouncement of Jesus. It was the tax-collector, not[40] the Pharisee, who left the temple justified in the sight of God. This would have been quite a shock to the original audience. Although from our perspective we can discern the fault in the attitude of the Pharisee, given the universal loathing of tax-collectors this may well have been overlooked by the crowd. Furthermore, the Pharisee was considered the paragon of religious piety, and his prayer would probably only have strengthened this perception.

The perfect participle δεδικαιωμένος indicates the justified state in which the tax-collector now stands, while the passive conceals the verdict of God. The background to this term is the Old Testament legal procedure of establishing who is in the right (Deut. 25.1). Although the idea in Lk. 18.14 is certainly forensic, it is not eschatological and in no way develops the role of faith as in the Pauline epistles. In this setting, the most that the term will indicate is a right relationship with God,[41]

make much of the article with ἁμαρτωλῷ, suggesting that the tax-collector sees himself in a class by himself when it comes to sin. However, R.G. Hoerber ('"God be Merciful to Me a Sinner": A Note on Lk 18:13', *CTM* 33 [1962], pp. 283-86) demonstrates from both classical and New Testament usage that the article is normally used when a noun is in apposition to a personal pronoun.

36. Against Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1188.

37. So Morris, *Luke*, p. 265; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 680; F. Büchsel, 'ἱλάσκομαι', *TDNT*, III, pp. 314-17.

38. Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 904; N.H. Young, '"Hilaskesthai" and Related Words in the New Testament', *EvQ* 55 (1983), pp. 169-76.

39. As argued by Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 154-55.

40. In this context παρ' ἐκεῖνον should be rendered *rather than*, not *more than*. Nolland (*Luke*, pp. 878-79), however, observes that without the Lukan framework the latter is possible. See also J.B. Cortés, 'The Greek Text of Luke 18:14a: A Contribution to the Method of Reasoned Eclecticism', *CBQ* 46 (1984), pp. 255-73, who favours the reading ἢ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος (A W Θ Ψ 063 f^{13} *Byz*) as the only possible reading from which the others derived.

41. Some are prepared to say that the Pauline doctrine of justification has its roots here. See Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 141; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 214; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1184-85; F.F. Bruce, 'Justification by Faith in the Non-Pauline Writings of the New Testament', *EvQ* 24 (1952), pp. 66-69; Hendrickx, *Parables*, p. 241. This is perhaps

though it is certainly more than God's approval or acceptance of the tax-collector's prayer.[42]

Scott argues that this pronouncement would have been incomprehensible to the original audience, for there is no mention of restoration to signify the tax-collector's repentance (cf. 3.12-13; 19.1-10). The Pharisees would not have agreed that a person could be justified purely on this basis.[43] In response, it is important to realize that the parable is not a complete theological treatise on justification (in fact the parable is similar to 15.11-32, where the lost son simply returns to his father). Jesus is not necessarily denying the need for restitution or a change of lifestyle (see 19.1-10), although the parable makes it clear that this is not a prerequisite for God's initial acceptance. Jesus' main purpose is to correct an attitude that tended to exclude certain people from God's salvation. Furthermore, it is irrelevant whether the Pharisees would have agreed with Jesus' pronouncement, for the purpose of such a parable is to challenge existing beliefs and attitudes. A new situation has arrived.[44]

The pronouncement leads into a wisdom saying (v. 14b) that is an exact parallel of 14.11 (cf. 1 Pet. 5.6). This saying, which speaks of the reversal of fortunes for the proud and humble, was obviously a well-known part of the gospel tradition. Indeed, Jesus probably uttered it on several occasions. Although it would appear that in this instance the saying has been added by Luke or his source, it is entirely appropriate to the context[45] and suits both the outlook of Luke and the historical Jesus.[46]

more significant if the setting for the parable is the daily atonement sacrifice (see Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, p. 156).

42. Against C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 645; Heininger, *Metaphorik*, p. 217.

43. Scott, *Hear*, pp. 95-97. See also Str–B, II, pp. 247-49.

44. J.M. Nützel, *Jesus als Offenbarer Gottes nach den lukanischen Schriften* (FB, 39; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1980), pp. 215.

45. Lk. 18.17 states the same idea in terms of entering the kingdom with a child-like faith.

46. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 678. It is difficult to see how some (for instance, Bultmann, *History*, p. 193; Schmid, *Lukas*, pp. 282-83; Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 498; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 216) can argue that the saying is inappropriate on the grounds that the tax-collector does not humble himself.

3. *Interpretation*

The primary intention of the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector is to set forth the criteria for righteousness before God. In so doing, the story is directed against a self-righteous attitude, and contains echoes of the portrayal of the elder son in the parable of the Lost Son (15.25-32). This self-righteousness was epitomized by the antagonism of some of the religious authorities to Jesus' association with tax-collectors and sinners. Thus we can well imagine that the original context for this parable was one of dispute, whereby Jesus once more defended his actions in the face of opposition (cf. 5.30-31; 15.1-2).[47] Consequently, the parable underlines God's concern for the marginalized and outcast (cf. 14.15-24; 19.1-10).

The parable teaches that true righteousness is not represented by a disdain for others, but by a repentant heart. When this is understood, no one can be barricaded out of the kingdom, for all can qualify. Thus the story reintroduces the dominant Lukan theme of repentance (cf. 13.1-9; 15.11-32), a theme that will soon be illustrated by a living example (19.1-10). That such a theme goes back to the historical Jesus cannot be doubted, and is given more prominence if the setting for the prayers of the two men was the daily atonement sacrifice. If this is the case, the parable implicitly teaches that atonement sacrifice is not enough, for only one man left the temple justified. Rather, sacrifice must be personalized by repentance and a reliance upon the grace of God.[48]

However, the parable is not simply an example story, it is a parable about God.[49] Two pictures of God are presented, one correct and one incorrect. The Pharisee incorrectly views God as one who gives credit for human merit and the rigid payment of tribute.[50] This, in turn, leads to a habitual comparison with others.[51] The true picture is of a God who

47. As Heininger (*Metaphorik*, p. 218) observes, in this sense the story truly becomes a parable of the historical Jesus.

48. So Bailey, *Peasant Eyes*, pp. 154-56.

49. See Schnider, 'Pharisäer und Zöllner', pp. 51-52; Schlosser, 'Le Pharisien et le publicain', p. 278; Hedrick, *Poetic Fictions*, pp. 232-33.

50. Hedrick (*Poetic Fictions*, pp. 233-34) wrongly believes that the tax-collector also has a distorted view of God in that he thinks he can merely expect God's mercy. However, Hedrick is led to this conviction by his unwarranted rejection of v. 14a.

51. M. Petzoldt, *Gleichnisse Jesu und christliche Dogmatik* (Göttingen:

is merciful, but a God who also requires humble repentance. In this way, the parable reinforces an important element of the Old Testament prophetic tradition (cf. Ezek. 33.10-20). The parable also shows that God's action is sovereign, and is not determined by religion or religious piety.[52] Thus a proper attitude before God is based on a knowledge of what God is like.

The parable is also an implicit christological statement. Schottroff correctly identifies v. 14a as an *Offenbarungsaussage*, for Jesus make a divine pronouncement, presuming to have access to the divine law court.[53]

In the Lukan setting, the parable presents a more drastic picture of the Pharisees, and serves to underline the rejection motif.[54] Verse 14b also picks up the reversal theme which runs throughout this Gospel (cf. 1.52; 2.24; 6.20-25; 14.11; 16.19-31).[55] However, contrary to the opinion of some, the parable does not directly instruct on prayer.[56] Prayer is simply the vehicle for the teaching, for it is in prayer that one's true relationship with God is revealed.[57]

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), p. 107.

52. Herzog (*Subversive Speech*, pp. 173-93) sees the main point of the parable being to condemn the right of the 'redemptive media' (i.e. religious tradition and institutions) to establish who is acceptable before God.

53. Schottroff, 'Pharisäer und Zöllner', p. 456. But, against Schottroff, this pronouncement does not confirm to the audience what is already apparent.

54. See 5.17-26, 30; 6.2, 7; 7.30, 39; 11.37-46, 53-54; 12.1; 15.1-2; 16.14-15). The conflict theme is discussed in Chapter 13, Section 3, below.

55. Crossan (*In Parables*, pp. 66-67) and Scott (*Hear*, pp. 96-98) both interpret the main sense of the parable in terms of the kingdom overturning existing conventions. But this is too vague. The story shows *why* such conventions are overthrown. A similarlarly nebulous reading of the story is offered by Downing ('Pharisee and the Tax-Collector', pp. 80-99), who sees both prayers as deliberate caricatures. Consequently, the audience is asked to reject both and to accept 'Jesus' offer of God's quite unconditional welcome' (p. 98). However, welcome and justification are two different things, Jesus' association with sinners demonstrates that God welcomes and accepts all, but it does not imply that he regards all as righteous.

56. Against W. Manson, *Luke*, p. 202; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, p. 450-51.

57. So Lenski, *St. Luke's Gospel*, p. 898; Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, p. 207; Johnson, *Luke*, p. 274.

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Part III
THE THEOLOGY OF THE LUKAN PARABLES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE PURPOSE OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION

Having completed an analysis of the major narrative parables of the Lukan *Sondergut*, we are now in a position to begin a systematic analysis of the findings to date. In doing this the overriding concern will be to establish a plausible reason as to why Luke chose these particular parables. Why is it that this Evangelist incorporated so much parabolic material that the other synoptic writers did not? Was it merely a case of utilizing any available source material, or was there a more illustrious scheme at work?

In seeking answers to these questions, the first task will be to examine the themes that emerge from the various parables and to look for possible unifying motifs (Chapter 13). Based on the findings of this chapter, Chapter 14 will then examine Luke's use of the promise-fulfilment theme as it relates to the overall purpose of the Gospel, and then re-examine the parables in this light. Chapter 15 takes its cue from the fact that the literary setting that Luke gives to several of the parables is one of conflict or controversy. Given that in this literary setting the antagonists or 'controversalists' are Jews, it may prove productive to examine the motifs that emerge from the parables in light of parallel motifs/ideas in contemporary Judaism. Finally, in Chapter 16 I shall attempt to further clarify Luke's purpose and to ascertain more precisely the role played by the parables in achieving this purpose.

Chapter 13

THE THEOLOGICAL THEMES OF THE LUKAN PARABLES AND THE QUESTION OF A UNIFYING MOTIF

1. *The Poor and the Marginalized*

Undoubtably one of the major interests of the Third Gospel, and one that has often been considered as determinative of Luke's audience, is a concern for the poor and marginalized. While concern for the poor is not unique to Luke, the theme is more prominent here than in Matthew, Mark, and the parenesis of the New Testament in general.[1]

Typically, the Infancy Narratives are programmatic. Elizabeth, a woman reproached by others for her childlessness, has the honour of bearing the forerunner to the Messiah of Israel (1.24-25), a Messiah who himself is born into poor circumstances (2.7, 22-24; cf. Lev. 12.2-8).[2] The Magnificat extols God who exalts the lowly and feeds the hungry, while humbling the proud and mighty (1.51-53). Thus it is fitting that in Luke shepherds visit the baby Jesus (2.8-20) rather than the magi (Mt. 2.1-13).[3]

1. Apart from Paul's discussion of the collection for the Jerusalem church in Rom. 15.26 and 2 Cor. 8–9, the only mentions of caring for the poor are found in Gal. 2.10, Jas. 1.26–2.23 and 1 Jn 3.17.

2. The general consensus that the family of Jesus was poor is challenged by M. Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church* (London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 26-27; and W.E. Pilgrim, *Good News to the Poor: Wealth and Poverty in Luke–Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), p. 46, who argue that a tradesman belonged to the lower middle class.

3. On the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, see R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (London/New York: Doubleday, rev. edn, 1993), esp. pp. 25-38 on the differing accounts. Also note the recent proposal by E. Franklin in *Luke: Interpreter of Paul, Critic of Matthew* (JSNTSup, 92; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 353-64; Franklin, in line with his overall thesis that Luke critically utilized Matthew's Gospel, believes that Luke rewrote Matthew's infancy narratives.

As the narrative unfolds further, it becomes obvious that the poor, the marginalized and the sinners constitute a significant portion of the many that will rise in Israel (2.34).[4] The reader is further prepared for this by Jesus' programmatic announcement in the Nazareth synagogue (4.18-21). Here Luke makes it clear that the poor and the marginalized are the prime focus of the Gospel and the main recipients of the kingdom, a fact endorsed by the Lukan beatitudes (6.20-24).

As the ministry of Jesus unfolds, his teaching is reflected in his actions.[5] Indeed, it is his propensity to dine with outcasts, sinners and tax-collectors that arouses such hostility from the religious establishment, and provides the basis for correction and exhortation (5.29-31; 7.36-50; 15.1-3; 19.1-10). In fact, the critics of Jesus are not only called upon to endorse his actions, but are encouraged to emulate them (7.36-50; 14.12-14). However, it should be noted that Jesus' purpose in associating with such people is not simply friendship, but must be understood in terms of the release or forgiveness (ἄφεσις) of sins (4.18; 5.24, 32; 24.47).[6]

The poor and marginalized with whom Jesus associates consist of a broad cross-section of the community, not confined to, but certainly including, the economically disadvantaged. Interest is shown in women,[7] children (18.15-17), widows (2.37; 4.25-26; 7.12; 18.3, 5;

4. R.L. Brawley, *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke–Acts* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Press, 1990), p. 52.

5. J.M. Dawsey (*The Lukan Voice: Confusion and Irony in the Gospel of Luke* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986], p. 148) claims that this attitude is reinforced by the style of language that Jesus uses in Luke's Gospel. Luke's Jesus consistently employs the language of the common folk, including several words that are listed on Phrynichus's register of condemned vulgarisms.

6. For a study of the forgiveness of sins in terms of the theology of jubilee, see R.B. Sloan Jr, *The Favorable Year of the Lord: A Study of Jubilary Theology in the Gospel of Luke* (Austin, TX: Schola Press, 1977).

7. Apart from the roles given to Mary, Elizabeth and Anna in the Infancy Narratives, see also 7.36-40; 8.1-3, 43-58; 10.38-42; 13.16; 23.49, 55; 24.1-10; Acts 1.13-14; 16.14-16; 18.24-28. R.C. Tannehill (*The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation. I. The Gospel according to Luke* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986], pp. 132-34) notes the use of male-female pairs in Luke–Acts (4.25-27; 7.1-17; 8.40-56; 11.31-32; 13.18-21; 15.4-10; 17.34-35; 13.10-17/14.1-6). On the role of women in Luke–Acts, see J.-M. van Cangh, 'La femme dans L'Evangile de Luc', *RTL* 24 (1993), pp. 297-324; K.E. Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993); M.R. D'Angelo, 'Women in Luke–Acts: A Redactional View', *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 441-

20.47; 21.1-4), lepers (5.12-16; 17.11-19), Samaritans and Gentiles (7.1-10; 10.25-37; 17.11-19), demoniacs (8.26-39), criminals (23.39-43), and tax-collectors and sinners (5.27-32; 7.34; 15.1; 19.1-10). The latter group are symbolically portrayed by the Lost Sheep (15.4-7). Even one of these people is valuable to Jesus.

Tannehill has also noted how concern for the poor is underlined by the pathos of the narrator. The reader is privy to vivid descriptions of illness and demonic affliction (Lk. 6.6, cf. Mk 3.1; Lk. 8.27, 29, cf. Mk 5.2; Lk. 8.43; 13.11), family particulars (7.11-12; 8.42), and encounters a caring Jesus who gives a child back to his parents (7.15; 9.42).[8]

While the precise identity of the poor in Luke continues to be debated,[9] it would appear that in addition to the economically or socially disadvantaged,[10] the poor also take on the symbolic sense of the

61; N.M. Flanagan, 'The Position of Women in the Writings of St. Luke', *Marianum* 40 (1978), pp. 288-304; J. Kopas, 'Jesus and Women: Luke's Gospel', *TTod* 43 (1986), pp. 192-202; E.H. Maly, 'Women and the Gospel of Luke', *BibTod* 10 (1980), pp. 99-104; R.F. O'Toole, *The Unity of Luke's Theology: An Analysis of Luke–Acts* (GNS, 9; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1984), pp. 118-26; E.J. Via, 'Women in the Gospel of Luke', in U. King (ed.), *Women in the World's Religions: Past and Present* (New York: Paragon, 1987), pp. 38-55; Dollar, *Exploration*, pp. 65-73; T.K. Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke-Acts* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1994); B.E. Reid, 'Luke: The Gospel for Women?', *CurTM* 21 (1994), pp. 405-14; R.J. Karris, 'Women and Discipleship in Luke', *CBQ* 56 (1994), pp. 1-20. On women in Acts, see J. Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke–Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), pp. 146-57; I.R. Reimer, *Frauen in der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas: Eine feministisch-theologische Exegese* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1992).

8. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 91-92.

9. Apart from the nuances discussed below, Seccombe (*Poor*, pp. 35-43) regards the poor as Israel the suffering nation, a depiction drawn from the later Isaianic model of the poor as the captives of the exile and the discouraged of the post-exilic community. Similarly, W. Heard, 'Luke's Attitude Toward the Rich and the Poor', *TJ* 9 (1988), pp. 47-58, who sees the poor as the faithful remnant in Israel who are oppressed for the sake of righteousness.

10. So R.J. Karris, 'The Poor and Rich: The Lukan *Sitz im Leben*', in C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke–Acts*, *PRS* 5 (1978), p. 113; Pilgrim, *Good News*, p. 63; B.J. Malina, 'Wealth and Poverty in the New Testament and its World', *Int* 41 (1987), pp. 354-67; J. Crowe, 'Wealth and Poverty in Luke's Writings', *ACR* 69 (1992), pp. 352-53. J.B. Green ('Good News to Whom? Jesus and the "Poor" in the Gospel of Luke', in J.B. Green and M. Turner [eds.], *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994], pp. 59-74) argues that, on the basis of who was considered poor in the

pious who are open to God's message (1.53-55; 4.18; 6.20; 7.22; 14.13, 21; 21.3).[11] This is definitively expressed by a number of the Lukan parables we have examined, including the Great Feast (14.15-24), the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31), and the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (18.9-14).[12] It would also seem that the disciples of Jesus are themselves models of the poor (and therefore are blessed), for they have truly left all to follow him (5.11, 28; 18.26-30).[13]

In summary, Jesus reflects the heart of God in his concern for the downtrodden of society. The kingdom is open to all, and God will actively seek out those who are disadvantaged, a fact graphically portrayed by the two visits to gather in the poor in the parable of the Great Feast (14.15-24). In this way, it can be seen that this parable, and the other parables mentioned above, are comments on actual episodes in the ministry of Jesus.

2. *Wealth and Possessions*

One of the dominant themes of the parables that we have examined is that of wealth and possessions, a theme that is intrinsically related to the concern for the poor and marginalized. Given the tenuous nature of

Greco-Roman world, together with the actual identity of the 'poor' to whom Jesus proclaimed the gospel, for Luke, 'poor' basically means the dispossessed who lack honour and status.

11. As proposed by L.T. Johnson *(Possessions,* pp. 132-71), who argues that, in view of Luke's use of the pattern of Prophet and People, there is a marked tendency to use the categories of *rich* and *poor* metaphorically. The poor are the עניים, those who are open to the message of Jesus the prophet, whereas the rich are the blind who reject the message. However, this model should be used with caution, for clearly not all followers of Jesus are poor. Furthermore, Luke clearly has an interest in the literal poor, as evidenced by the teaching on wealth and possessions. In this regard, Pilgrim (*Good News*, p. 56) points out that in the Old Testament there is an overlap between the עניים and the economically deprived.

12. Schottroff ('Pharisäer und Zöllner', pp. 453-55) and Frickel ('Die Zöllner', pp. 369-80) show that by the time of the written Gospels tax-collectors typify the humble and repentant, and are thus a model of piety.

13. So H.-J. Degenhardt, *Lukas Evangelist der Armen: Besitz und Besitzverzicht in den lukanischen Schriften. Eine traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965), pp. 50-51; L. Schottroff and W. Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor* (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), pp. 77-87, who state that the 'poor' disciples thus function as a challenge to the rich (including Christians) in Luke's day.

life and one's ultimate accountability to God, Jesus warns of the danger of trusting in material wealth for security (12.13-21; 16.9-13). To ignore this warning and fall prey to material and worldly concerns may lead to a rejection of the kingdom invitation (14.15-24) and a failure to procure a place in the 'eternal habitations' (16.9). Thus the nature of the kingdom and of the present age forces a reassessment of values. Wealth, rather than signifying the blessing of God, is an obstacle to true discipleship, for it not only diverts one's focus from more weighty concerns, it denies the needs of those less fortunate (12.21; 16.19-31). Consequently, rather than squandering property in the 'far country' (15.11-24), one should follow the example of the Samaritan traveller and use money and goods for the benefit of others (10.33-35).

Each of the parables in the Travel Narrative which features the theme of wealth and possessions is immediately followed by teaching on the same theme. The Rich Fool (12.13-21) leads into a discussion about the faithfulness of God to provide for human need, thereby allowing the kingdom to be sought as a first priority, with the result that treasure is stored in the heavenly vault rather than in earthly barns (12.22-34).[14] In a similar way, the refusal of the invitation to the Great Feast is followed by a collection of sayings (including two short parables) regarding counting the cost of discipleship. The ultimate cost is a complete renunciation of all (14.25-33).[15] In Luke 16, the two narrative parables are separated by a rebuke against the Pharisees who covet money.[16] Such may be a high priority for people, but in God's economy it is an abomination (16.14-15). By adopting this editorial approach, Luke is not only

14. Luke has ταμεῖον οὐδε ἀποθήκη (12.24), whereas Matthew has only ἀποθήκη. While it is ἀποθήκη that provides the verbal link to the parable (Lk. 12.18), the use of the hendiadys probably serves to underline this link.

15. Against Nolland (*Luke*, pp. 764-66), we should not separate the carrying of one's cross and the renunciation of possessions as two different aspects of discipleship. In this setting the latter interprets the former.

16. H. Moxnes (*The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* [Overtures to Biblical Theology; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988], esp. p. 163) argues that the portrayal of the Pharisees as 'lovers of money' is a literary-polemic motif that has links to both Jewish and Greek thought, where opponents of a community or outsiders were so designated. On the other hand D.B. Gowler ('Characterization in Luke: A Socio-Narratological Approach', *BTB* 19 [1989], p. 59) believes that the designation is equivalent to *thieves*, for in a limited goods society increasing one's goods can only occur at the expense of another's loss.

providing an interpretive framework for the parables in question, he is also showing that the theme of wealth and possessions formed a fundamental part of the ministry of Jesus.

At the conclusion of the Travel Narrative, Luke presents his readers with a stark portrayal of two men: a nameless ruler and Zacchaeus the tax-collector. Although both men understand the prerequisites for discipleship, only one can pay the cost (18.18-30; 19.1-10). Here, a change of attitude to material wealth functions as a tangible sign of repentance.

The teaching on wealth is not introduced for the first time in the Travel Narrative. The foundation is laid in the Magnificat, with the promise of a reversal of fortunes for the rich and the poor (1.51-53). Furthermore, Luke alone reports John the Baptist's explanation of 'the fruit worthy of repentance' as an honest and wise use of money and possessions (3.10-14). Thus, for Luke, John truly acts as a forerunner to Jesus. Both advocate a detachment from material concerns, and both live their life accordingly (7.21; 9.58).

Luke's concern regarding wealth and possessions is evident in his redaction of the Markan material. In Mk 1.18, Simon and Andrew and James and John leave their nets and their father respectively, whereas in Luke they leave everything (5.11; cf. 5.28). Elsewhere Luke's Jesus instructs the rich ruler to sell all (18.22; cf. Mk 10.21), while the Markan warning regarding persecution for those who have renounced all (Mk 10.30) is omitted, thus making such action more attractive and desirable. In the sending out of the twelve, Luke, in contrast to Mark, does not even allow a staff to be carried (9.3; cf. Mk 6.8). In this way total reliance upon God is stressed. Finally, the emphasis on wealth is further apparent in Luke's version of the Beatitudes (Q), where blessing and woe are pronounced upon the poor and rich respectively (6.20, 24; cf. Mt. 5.3).

Although the Lukan parables mainly present negative illustrations (i.e. how not to handle wealth), there are a number of positive examples in the Gospel as a whole. Apart from John and Jesus, the disciples themselves typify those who have renounced all (5.11, 28; 18.26-30), and ironically, in the last mention of the theme in the Gospel, it is a poor widow who surrenders all that she has to God (21.1-4).

In Acts, it is the early Christian community that assumes the model attitude to wealth and possessions (2.43-47; 3.6; 4.32-34). However, the society of common goods is not formalized, but is motivated by love

and the Spirit.[17] In addition, the first Gentile convert is praised because of his generosity to the poor (10.2) while, on the other hand, greed leads to the downfall of Ananias and Sapphira (5.1-11).[18]

Most discussion on the theme of wealth and possessions in Luke–Acts centres around the apparent contradiction between a call to total renunciation of goods as the cost of discipleship (Lk. 14.33; 18.18-30; cf. 5.11, 27), and a more moderate call to stewardship of wealth and almsgiving (3.10-14; 14.15-24; 16.9; 19.1-10, 11-27; note also those people of means who support the work of the gospel—8.1-3; 10.38-42; Acts 12.12-13; 16.15). While most agree that Luke is not advocating total renunciation of goods for all Christians,[19] there is no real consensus on the reasons for these two different perspectives. Some associate the radical strand with either the extreme situation governed by the ministry of Jesus,[20] or a situation of persecution,[21] or believe it to be relevant only for a select few.[22] Others understand it as an ideal, stressing the need for radical change[23] and a complete trust in God,[24] or

17. Heard, 'Rich and the Poor', pp. 68-70.

18. For more on the theme of wealth and possessions in Acts, see J. Gillman, *Possessions and the Life of Faith: A Reading of Luke–Acts* (Zacchaeus Studies—New Testament; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), pp. 94-111; Seccombe, *Poor*, pp. 197-222.

19. One exception being Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 161-68), who wrongly believes that abandonment and renunciation are called for in 16.1-31.

20. S. Brown, *Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of Luke* (AnBib, 36; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1969), pp. 98-105; J. Navone, *Themes of St. Luke* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1970), pp. 113-14; E. Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke–Acts* (London: SPCK, 1975), pp. 152-54; Pilgrim, *Good News*, p. 101; D.B. Kraybill, 'Possessions in Luke–Acts: A Sociological Perspective', *PRS* 10 (1983), pp. 215-39; Schottroff and Stegemann, *Hope of the Poor*, pp. 78-79.

21. W. Schmithals, 'Lukas—Evangelist der Armen', *ThViat* 12 (1975), pp. 153-67.

22. K.-J. Kim, *Stewardship and Almsgiving in Luke's Theology* (JSNTSup, 155; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), who believes that radical renunciation applies only to a small group of itinerant disciples. This echoes the earlier proposal by Degenhardt (*Lukas Evangelist der Armen*, pp. 27-39), who saw the command originally relating to the disciples of Jesus, then to the leaders (*Amtsträgen*) of the church.

23. B.E. Beck, *Christian Character*, p. 52; Heard, 'Rich and the Poor', p. 73; P. Liu, 'Did the Lucan Jesus Desire Voluntary Poverty of His Followers?', *EvQ* 64 (1992), pp. 300-17.

making the point that discipleship has no limits.[25] D.L. Mealand explains it in terms of the different layers of tradition in Luke. Whereas Matthew and Mark softened the tradition, Luke preserved its original emphasis.[26] T.E. Schmidt, on the other hand, believes that a shift in focus was inevitable given the delay of the end and the difficulty of compliance.[27]

Given that both strands of teaching occur within the Gospel, and that the call to total renunciation in 14.25-33 is addressed to the crowds in general, any view that limits the call to abandonment of possessions to a particular group would appear to be problematical. Assuming that both emphases come from the historical Jesus, it seems best to take the radical strand as indicative of the need for total commitment, including the willingness to forsake all, due to the arrival of the kingdom age. The more moderate teaching then functions as a model for Christian ethics.

However we resolve the tension between a prudent use of wealth and a radical renunciation and detachment, we cannot agree with O'Toole[28] that there is no condemnation of wealth in Luke–Acts.[29] Although Luke does not condemn the wealthy as such (nor does he idealize poverty), wealth is simply a hindrance to following Jesus, for it not only leads to pre-occupation and unpreparedness for the return of the Son of Man,[30] it fails to echo the concern of God for the poor.

Luke's interest in the theme of wealth and possessions has been

24. W. Radl, *Das Lukas-Evangelium* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), pp. 121-25.

25. Seccombe, *Poor*, pp. 100-34.

26. D.L. Mealand, *Poverty and Expectation in the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1980), pp. 12-37.

27. T.E. Schmidt, *Hostility to Wealth in the Synoptic Gospels* (JSNTSup, 15; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 166-67. G. Theissen (*The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991], p. 288) also tends to favour this understanding.

28. O'Toole, *Luke's Theology*, p. 135.

29. On the condemnation of wealth in the synoptics, see Schmidt, *Hostility*, who claims that the reasons for this condemnation are not socio-economic but religious-ethical (p. 164). See also Nickelsburg, 'Riches', pp. 324-44, who states that while Luke softens the harsh critique of the rich compared to that found in *1 En.* 92-105, 'the accumulation and holding of riches and possessions are inversely related to the possibility of salvation' (p. 340).

30. 12.35-48 (in view of 12.13-34); 21.24 (cf. 8.14); 17.26-30. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 248-49.

interpreted in various ways. Some believe that he aims to challenge the prevailing economic system by calling for a radical redistribution of wealth and power.[31] Others prefer to limit the emphasis more to the specific audience to whom the Gospel is addressed. This, in turn, leads to two possibilities. Either Luke's readers are poor and need encouragement,[32] or they are rich and need correction[33] (or instruction, if non-Christians[34]). Of course, these options are not mutually exclusive, and if Luke is addressing a Christian community his concerns would appear to be pastoral, reflecting a problem arising out of a mixed community of both rich and poor.[35]

3. *The Theme of Conflict and Rejection*

In Luke's Gospel there is an inseparable relationship between concern for the poor and marginalized, teaching on wealth and possessions, and the theme of conflict and rejection.[36] Conflict arises between Jesus and the religious authorities because of his association with the lowly (5.29-32; 7.36-50; 15.1-3), and his rebuke of those who serve mammon and not God (16.14-15; 20.45-47) or use their position to gain the applause

31. So Moxnes, *Economy*, pp. 162-69; Gillman, *Possessions*, pp. 114-15; Crowe, 'Wealth', p. 354.

32. Pilgrim, *Good News*, pp. 160-63; Moxnes, *Economy*, pp. 163-65, who argues that there would not have been a rich–poor gap in Luke's church. Generally, his readers would comprise the non-elite lower classes, although almsgiving and sharing may have been appropriate. It is hard to agree with Dupont (*Béatitudes*, III, pp. 149-203) that Luke wants to warn the poor about wealth.

33. So Karris, 'Poor', pp. 112-25; Schottroff and Stegemann, *Hope of the Poor*, pp. 87-105, 116-17. For Karris, Luke's focus is a group of rich Jewish Christians, typified by the Pharisees in the Gospel, who see their wealth as a mark of divine favour and have no regard for their poor brethren.

34. So Seccombe, *Poor*, pp. 228-29, who believes that Luke is outlining the cost of commitment to rich God-fearers.

35. So Stöger, 'Armut und Ehelosigkeit: Besitz und Ehe der Jünger nach dem Lukasevangelium', *GuL* 40 (1967), pp. 43-59; Pilgrim, *Good News*, pp. 101, 160-66; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 128; Liu, 'Lucan Jesus', pp. 315-17; H. Moxnes, 'The Social Context of Luke's Community', *Int* 48 (1994), pp. 379-89.

36. For the way Luke, in contrast to Matthew and Mark, deals with the conflict theme, see J.D. Kingsbury, 'The Plot of Luke's Story of Jesus', *Int* 48 (1994), pp. 369-78. Kingsbury shows that up until the Jerusalem entry, Luke's Jesus is more conversational with his opponents than confrontational (e.g. compare Lk. 6.11 with Mk 3.6).

of others (11.43; 14.7-11). This is quite apparent in the parables of the Travel Narrative and the contexts in which they appear.

The Great Feast (14.15-24) presents a challenge to the Pharisaical doctrine of election.[37] Election cannot be assumed for it needs a personal response, a response centred around the acceptance of Jesus and his kingdom message. The upshot of the parable is that the religious authorities need a wider view of the kingdom, one that incorporates the disadvantaged and the outcasts. The parables of the Lost are explicitly addressed to a conflict situation. The religious leaders are implicitly rebuked for failing to show compassion to the sinners as the lost of Israel. Furthermore, as shepherds of the nation, they have lost part of the flock (15.4-7). In the picture of the elder son we see those, including Jesus' antagonists, who have a distorted view of God and the requirements for a relationship with him (15.25-32). In the context of the rebuke of 16.14-15, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31) is addressed to those, including the Pharisees, who love money and are thereby blinded to the needs of the poor. Similarly, the Good Samaritan (10.25-37) is a powerful statement against a religious observance that prevents an openness to the needs of others, while the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (18.9-14) is directed against a self-righteous, exclusive attitude. Finally, the Barren Fig Tree (13.6-9) is an indictment on the fruitlessness of the nation, or on individuals within it, and prepares for the pronouncements against Jerusalem (13.31-35; 19.41-44) and the rejection of the gospel by the Jews in Acts.

Of course, controversy does not arise purely out of Jesus' social interaction. Fundamentally, he is perceived to violate the written and oral law. This is evident in the sabbath controversies (6.1-11; 13.10-17; 14.1-6), the dispute over table etiquette (11.37-54), and the accusation of blasphemy (5.20-26).[38]

In the original context of controversy, the function of the above parables is twofold: to defend Jesus' actions, but more importantly, to teach and correct. In this sense, the parables are an 'imaginative

37. See J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 245-71, and the discussion in Chapter 15, below.

38. See M. Hengel and R. Deines, 'E.P. Sanders' "Common Judaism", Jesus and the Pharisees', *JTS* 46 (1995), pp. 1-70 (esp. pp. 1-16), who argue against Sanders that Jesus aroused hostility by strongly opposing the oral law and the contemporary interpretation of the written law (see E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 270-93).

bridge'[39] which Jesus uses to confront and challenge his audience's distorted views of God and his requirements, views which result in hostility to his ministry.

More pertinent for our discussion, however, is how the parables are understood and utilized by Luke. Specifically, we need to question what part the above parables play in any rejection theme. Here we enter the widely debated issue of the precise status of Israel in Luke–Acts. This cannot be discussed at length here, although a brief analysis must be attempted.

The Infancy Narratives present the reader with hope and optimism regarding the restoration of Israel. In the births of John and Jesus the ancient promises to Abraham and David are in the process of fulfilment, and a glorious future awaits (1.16-17, 54-55, 68-79; 2.11, 29-32). However, as the narrative unfolds the mood changes from hope and expectation to one of ambivalence. Jesus encounters unexpected resistance from the outset. Here again the Nazareth pericope is programmatic (4.22-30), as the rejection by his townsfolk anticipates the rejection by the religious authorities and ultimately the people as a whole.[40] By ch. 13 Jesus is seen mourning over Jerusalem (13.33-35;

39. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 178.

40. A common view is that Luke portrays the crowds, in contrast to the religious authorities, in a positive light (so O'Toole, *Luke's Theology*, pp. 19-20; R.L. Brawley, *Luke–Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* [SBLMS, 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], pp. 133-54). However, although there is an initial positive response to Jesus (4.15, 22; 5.26; 6.17-18; 7.16-17; 8.40; 9.11, 43), there are a number of warnings regarding superficiality (9.23-27, 57-62; 13.22-30; 14.25-35; 17.26-30). In contrast to the synoptic parallels, it is the crowd who are called hypocrites (12.54-56; cf. Mt. 16.1-3 where the leaders are addressed), and some of the crowd who instigate the Beelzebub controversy (11.14-23; cf. Mt. 12.22-30; Mk 3.22-27). By 19.7, the crowd have echoed the anger of the authorities over Jesus' association with sinners. It is true that from 19.47 onwards the λαός have a more positive role, hindering the plot against Jesus. In examining this ambivalent attitude to the crowds, Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 143-66) observes that the negative portrayal is designed to prepare the reader for the part the people play in siding with the leaders in crucifying Jesus (23.13-25; cf. Acts 2.23, 36). On the other hand, the remorse shown in 23.48 prepares for the response to Peter's speech in Acts 2.37-41. The above assessment tends to repudiate the contention of Brawley (*Conflict*, pp. 133-54) that the crowds are only portrayed negatively when under the sway of the chief priests. See also J.B. Chance, 'The Jewish People and the Death of Jesus in Luke–Acts: Some Implications of an Inconsistent Narrative', in E.H. Lovering Jr (ed.), *SBL Seminars Papers 1991* (Atlanta, GA:

19.41-44), and rather than a picture of a restored Zion, one finds the image of a city that will once more suffer the judgment of God. This is underlined in the parables of the Pounds (Throne Claimant) and Wicked Tenants, where the authority of the king/owner is rejected by the citizens (19.12-14; 20.9-19). Finally, in Jerusalem the authorities complete their plan to arrest and destroy Jesus (11.53-54; 19.47; 20.1-8, 20-26, 27-40; 22.2). However, the conflict continues at the cross (23.35, 36, 39) and will continue in Acts where the apostles, in many ways, suffer the same rejection as their master (for instance, Acts 4.1-22; 5.17-42; 7.1-60; 13.50; 14.19).

So much is clear. However, there are two fundamental points of dispute. First, there is the question of how the political and nationalistic hopes expressed in the Infancy Narratives are to be understood. Tannehill believes that these are genuine political hopes that are paralleled by the expectations of the disciples (19.11; 24.21; Acts 1.6), but this real possibility has been forfeited by Israel's rejection of its Messiah. Peace is thereby deferred and continual rejection means continual delay. By the end of Acts hope is still held out for the Jews.[41] However, this proposal does not take due account of Simeon's oracle (2.34-35), which adds a note of sobriety to what precedes. Furthermore, if the restoration of Israel was a real possibility at this point, then arguably the Messiah would not necessarily have to suffer and die. But this, according to Luke, is the foundational part of the divine plan, and by implication, the basis for forgiveness of sins.[42]

Scholars Press, 1991), pp. 50-81, and R.P. Carlson, 'The Role of the Jewish People in Luke's Passion Theology', in Lovering (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1991*, pp. 82-102, who both believe that Luke portrays the crowds as guilty of the death of Jesus, though the former sees their guilt arising from their role as passive spectators while the latter regards them as active participants.

41. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 26, 34, 37, 41, 252, 260; II, pp. 15-17, 344-57. Tannehill feels that by presenting hope in this way, rejection is felt more deeply by the reader.

42. It has often been noted that Luke nowhere interprets Jesus' death in an atoning sense (see H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St Luke* [New York: Harper & Row, 1960], p. 201; Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, pp. 65-67; A. George, *Etudes sur l'oeuvre de Luc* [Paris: Gabalda, 1978], pp. 185-211). However, although there is an absence of the Pauline interpretation of the cross in Luke–Acts, Luke certainly understands Jesus' death as part of the divine purpose (24.26, 46; Acts 2.23; 4.28), and this purpose is ultimately universal salvation/forgiveness of sin (2.32; 24.47; Acts 1.8; 2.38; 3.19-21). Thus the two are inseparably linked. See M. Dömer, *Das*

Other suggestions regarding the promises expressed in the Infancy Narratives include their fulfilment in the church as the true Israel,[43] or by the faithful in Israel,[44] the desire to restore a divided Israel,[45] or the idea that fulfilment comes via ironic reversal—the concept of suffering servanthood.[46] All these have some degree of merit and, in fact, are not mutually exclusive. The hope is real, but it is not a literal, nationalistic hope. Rather, Luke utilizes the contemporary expectation for narrative purposes, whereby the role of the Messiah and the nature of kingship are gradually redefined (4.18-21; 9.18-22; 18.31-34; 24.26, 46).[47]

The second point of dispute is how Paul's severe words in Acts 28.25-28 (cf. 13.46; 18.6) should be interpreted, given the partial

Heil Gottes: Studien zur Theologie des lukanischen Doppelwerkes (BBB, 51; Cologne/Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1978), pp. 70-93; D.P. Moessner, 'The Theology of the Cross in Luke–Acts', in D.J. Lull (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1990* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), pp. 165-95; P. Doble, *The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's Theology of the Cross* (SNTSMS, 87; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). In addition, Moessner has elsewhere shown how the Travel Narrative pictures an Exodus deliverance/redemption that is dependent upon the suffering and death of the prophet Jesus (see D.P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989]), pp. 322-24. Taking an entirely different line, D. Ravens (*Luke and the Restoration of Israel* [JSNTSup, 119; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], pp. 139-69) sees this as a deliberate attempt by Luke to emphasize atonement via repentance (not the cross), thereby stressing continuity with Judaism.

43. O'Toole, *Luke's Theology*, pp. 17-22.

44. D. Tiede, '"Glory to Thy People Israel": Luke–Acts and the Jews', in J.B. Tyson (ed.), *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People: Eight Critical Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), pp. 21-34, who believes that by the end of Luke–Acts the restoration of Israel has only just begun.

45. Ravens, *Restoration*, pp. 24-106, who argues that the promises to Israel and the restoration of the nation find realization in Jesus and Christianity. It is not that the church is the new Israel, rather that the Gentiles are incorporated into Israel. The Samaritans represent the true heirs of the northern kingdom (Ephraim), and their acceptance of Jesus and the gospel shows that the restoration of Israel is underway. This is further demonstrated in Stephen's speech (Acts 7), which is placed between chs. 6 and 8—both of which deal with the healing of divisions—and the quote of Amos 9.11-12 in Acts 15.15-18.

46. D.P. Moessner, 'The Ironic Fulfilment of Israel's Glory', in Tyson (ed.), *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People*, pp. 35-50.

47. See Brawley, *God*, pp. 44-51. Tannehill does, in fact, acknowledge this process of redefinition (see R.C. Tannehill, 'What Kind of King? What Kind of Kingdom? A Study of Luke', *WW* 12 [1992], pp. 17-22).

response of the Jews in the preceding narrative, and especially the belief of some in the immediate context (28.24). Here we encounter a wide divergence of opinion. At one extreme, Jervell sees this as evidence of the conclusion of the mission to Israel on the basis of its success.[48] On the other hand, others see here the abandonment of the Jewish mission due to its complete failure. Thus, for Luke, God has rejected Israel because of its persistent rejection of Jesus and the Christian message.[49] Luke–Acts thus helps form the basis for anti-Semitism.[50] Others prefer to speak of a tension at the end of Acts, with mission still open and hope held out for the Jews.[51] Moessner goes further and claims that, on the basis of an ironical pattern in Luke–Acts, whereby Israel's salvation is based on Israel's rejection, at the end of Acts there is an expectation for a future gathering of Israel.[52]

Some, while agreeing that Luke offers a harsh presentation of the Jews, emphasize that this presentation must be seen in the light of the motives that underlie it. Marilyn Salmon, for instance, believes that

48. J. Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke–Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), pp. 41-74, who believes that the role of the Jewish mission was simply to provide a transition to the Gentile mission. The Jewish mission was successful once this was achieved.

49. In one form or other, E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 729; S.G. Wilson, *Gentiles*, pp. 219-38; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 31-65; H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 227-28.

50. L. Gaston, 'Anti-Judaism and the Passion Narrative in Luke and Acts', in P. Richardson with D. Granskou (eds.), *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity.* I. *Paul and the Gospels* (SCJ, 2; Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986), p. 151; J.T. Sanders, 'The Salvation of the Jews in Luke–Acts', in C.H. Talbert (ed.), *Luke–Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), pp. 104-28; *idem*, *The Jews in Luke–Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1987); M.J. Cook, 'The Mission to the Jews in Luke–Acts: Unravelling Luke's "Myth of the Myriads"', in Tyson (ed.), *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People*, pp. 102-23.

51. So I.H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, rev. edn, 1989), p. 187; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 163; II, pp. 344-57; Tiede, 'Glory', pp. 21-34; H. Merkel, 'Israel im lukanischen Werk', *NTS* 40 (1994), pp. 371-98, who aligns Luke's view of Israel with that of Paul in Rom. 9–11, believing that Luke may have had a knowledge of Romans (p. 397).

52. Moessner, 'Ironic Fulfilment', pp. 35-50. See also L.R. Helyer, 'Luke and the Restoration of Israel', *JETS* 36 (1993), pp. 317-29.

Luke is a Jew who, standing within Judaism, offers a prophetic critique of the nation.[53] Such a prophetic critique always runs the risk of appearing anti-Jewish when retold to those 'outside'.[54] Brawley claims that Luke is fighting anti-Paulinism in the Christian church, and by validating Paul's Gentile mission, offers conciliation, not rejection, to the Jews.[55] Denova shows that those who view Luke–Acts as anti-Semitic have failed to appreciate the relationship between conflict and the promise-fulfilment motif. The rejection of Jesus and his message by (the majority of) the Jews is merely another instance of the prophetic word fulfilled and thus functions as a further legitimating device.[56] Others point to the need to explain Jewish hostility to Christianity, given that the two claimed a common heritage.[57] In the end, therefore, it would appear to be misdirected to say that Luke's harsh presentation of the Jews is anti-Semitic, for in so saying we are forcing Luke–Acts

53. M. Salmon, 'Insider or Outsider? Luke's Relationship with Judaism', in Tyson (ed.), *Luke–Acts and the Jewish People*, pp. 76-82. So also D.L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke–Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 70, 127-32.

54. J.A. Sanders, 'The Question of Method', in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke–Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 8.

55. Brawley, *Conflict*. Others who believe that Luke's motive is to justify the Gentile mission include E. Trocmé, 'The Jews as Seen by Paul and Luke', in J. Neusner and E.S. Frerichs (eds.), *'To See Ourselves as Others See Us': Jews and 'Others' in Late Antiquity* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), pp. 145-61; B.J. Koet, *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke–Acts* (SNTA, 14; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), pp. 119-39, 150-53, who (wrongly) argues that Isa. 6.9-10 is quoted regarding the failure of the Jews to understand the Gentile mission; C.A. Evans, 'Prophecy and Polemic: Jews in Luke's Scriptural Apologetic', in Evans and Sanders (eds.), *Luke and Scripture*, pp. 171-211. In a previous essay, 'Is Luke's View of the Jewish Rejection of Jesus Anti-Semitic?', in D.D. Sylva (ed.), *Reimaging the Death of the Lukan Jesus* (BBB, 73; Frankfurt: Anton Hain, 1990), pp. 29-56, Evans stresses that Luke wants to place Jesus' death in the biblical framework of Israel's rejection of the prophets, and the promise-fulfilment of the suffering and death of the Messiah.

56. R.I. Denova, *The Things Accomplished Among Us: Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke–Acts* (JSNTSup, 141; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 38-40.

57. So Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, pp. 77-113; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 183-85; R.F. O'Toole, 'Reflections on Luke's Treatment of the Jews in Luke–Acts', *Bib* 74 (1993), p. 554.

into a box it was never designed to fit. Luke's concern is not racial but theological.[58]

In assessing the precise status of Israel in Luke–Acts, it is important to take into account the full range of the material. On the one hand, the reader forms quite a negative view of Jewish religious life. In many instances Jesus is opposed to contemporary thought and practice, the Jews are fully responsible for his death, and the apostolic mission encounters repeated resistance from the Jews. On the other hand, Luke presents a more favourable picture of the Pharisees[59] than the Sadducees and the chief priests. In addition, apart from (the disputed) Acts 28.25-28, Luke is aware only of a Christianity that maintains its relationship with Judaism.[60] Consequently, the viewpoint of Tyson is

58. O'Toole, 'Reflections', pp. 529, 534. Thus there is no need to resort to the proposal by N.A. Beck (*Mature Christianity: The Recognition and Repudiation of the Anti-Jewish Polemic of the New Testament* [Toronto/London: Associated University Presses, 1985], pp. 166-247), who recommends a re-translation of the text employing 'sensitive interpretative circumlocution' in order to avoid the anti-Jewish polemic.

59. This is overstated at times, especially in regard to the Gospel of Luke. Although Jesus dines with them (7.36), they warn Jesus about Herod (13.31), and are never blamed for Jesus' death, Luke, while softening some of the controversies reported by Matthew and Mark (11.14-23; 12.54-56), adds controversy material of his own (7.29-30; 15.1-3; 16.14-15). See J.T. Carroll, 'Luke's Portrayal of the Pharisees', *CBQ* 50 (1988), pp. 604-621. Carroll rightly criticizes the view of O'Toole ('Reflections', p. 549) that Luke implies that Christians are the true heirs of the Pharisees, by showing how the Christian Pharisees are a tool used to legitimate the Gentile mission by presenting them as a link between Judaism and the church (Luke still portrays them as troublemakers [Acts 15.5]). The role of the Pharisees in Luke–Acts continues to attract a considerable amount of scholarly attention, with some divergent views apparent. For example, see J. Ziesler, 'Luke and the Pharisees', *NTS* 25 (1978–79), pp. 146-57; Brawley, *Conflict*, pp. 84-132; J.D. Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991); D.B. Gowler, *Host, Guest, Enemy and Friend: Portraits of the Pharisees in Luke–Acts* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity, 2; New York: Peter Lang, 1991); Neale, *Sinners*; R.C. Tannehill, 'Should we Love Simon the Pharisee? Hermeneutical Reflections on the Pharisees in Luke', *CurTM* 21 (1994), pp. 424-33; Darr, *Character Building*, pp. 85-126; Franklin, *Interpreter*, pp. 174-97. For a discussion of who, according to Luke, is to blame for the death of Jesus, see J.A. Weatherly, *Jewish Responsibility for the Death of Jesus in Luke–Acts* (JSNTSup, 106; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), who concludes that guilt is ascribed to the leaders and the people of Jerusalem.

60. Tiede (*Prophecy*, p. 132) states, 'Faith is found *within* Israel, and the mis-

attractive. He considers that Acts 28.25-28 relates to corporate Israel. Seen as a whole, the mission to Israel is a failure, for there has not been a 'wholesale repentance'. Still, individuals have responded and may still respond in the future.[61] But Luke has chosen to portray the partial response of 28.24 in a negative, rather than a positive light.

In light of the above discussion, we now need to reconsider the role of the parables which contribute to the conflict theme. Do they imply a rejection of Israel? Perhaps not surprisingly, the answer to this question tends to be governed by one's overall views of the Jews in Luke–Acts. However, a sounder methodology would be to examine the parables in their immediate literary context, rather than in the context of a disputed passage at the end of Acts. When this is done, it appears that there is no warrant to view the parables in terms of the rejection of Israel. The Great Feast (14.15-24) is primarily concerned to illustrate God's concern for the poor and outcast,[62] although it also corrects an inadequate doctrine of election by stressing the need for personal response. For Luke and his readers the parable may have a secondary sense of rejection (implying also the Gentile mission), but it need not refer to the whole nation of Israel. Indeed, it is instructive that whereas Matthew focuses on the punitive action of the host (Mt. 22.7), Luke stresses his graciousness.

The only other parable that we have examined that could support a total rejection of Israel is the Barren Fig Tree (13.6-9). Again, however, the context is repentance, not rejection (as in the Wicked Tenants [20.9-26]). As indicated above, the parable does prepare for the laments over Jerusalem and the rejection of the gospel by the Jews in Acts. However, not all Jews reject the message. In this sense, the open-endedness of the parable is appropriate (cf. 15.25-32).

In conclusion, it would seem that in their literary context the Lukan parables of conflict serve a number of purposes. For narrative purposes, they highlight the controversy aroused by Jesus' ministry and thereby prepare the reader for his death. However, rather than indicating a total rejection of Israel, the parables present two models for discipleship. In a negaive sense, the antagonists embody character traits that Luke wants

sion to the Gentiles proceeds out of that faith' (emphasis in original).

61. J.B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke–Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 176-78. Also J.A. Weatherly, 'The Jews in Luke–Acts', *TynBul* 40 (1989), pp. 107-17.

62. See Schottroff and Stegemann, *Hope of the Poor*, pp. 99-103.

his readers to avoid. In a positive sense, by stressing Jesus' care for those who oppose him, Luke's readers are given a concrete example of loving one's enemies (cf. 6.27).[63] In other words, the parables primarily serve an instructive rather than a condemnatory function.[64] This will be confirmed shortly when we examine the possibility of a unifying theme.

4. *Prayer*

At each crucial point in Luke's narrative, the leading characters are pictured in prayer. In the Gospel this applies mainly to Jesus (though note 1.10; 2.37), who prays after his baptism, when he anointed by the Spirit (3.21); prior to impending conflict (5.16); in selecting the twelve (6.12); before Peter's confession (9.18); prior to the transfiguration (9.28-29); as an impetus to teaching the disciples to pray (11.1); for Peter (22.32); in Gethsemane (22.40-46); and at death (23.46). Luke's interest in this regard is underlined by the fact that apart from the Gethsemane pericope, none of the synoptic parallels mentions prayer. Note also Luke's amendment of Mk 11.17, where the temple will not merely be called a house of prayer, but will be a house of prayer (19.46). In addition, Jesus teaches the disciples that prayer is necessary for strength to survive future tribulation (21.36; cf. 22.40, 46). This emphasis on prayer continues in Acts, where prayer is a fundamental part of the life of the early church.[65]

W. Ott believed that with this focus on prayer Luke was preparing the church for an extended period of existence due to the parousia delay.[66] However, Ott's study was a product of the Conzelmann era and he failed to appreciate that there is an eschatological focus present in such texts as 18.1-8. Since Ott, others have stressed the paradigmatic function of prayer in Luke, whereby Jesus at prayer is presented as a

63. M.A. Powell, 'The Religious Leaders in Luke: A Literary-Critical Study', *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 109-110.

64. Rightly Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 25, 'Lehrhafte, argumentative und pragmatische Funktion sind miteinander Verschränkt'.

65. Acts 1.14; 2.42; 3.1; 6.4, 6; 8.15-17; 10.4, 9, 30-31; 12.5, 12; 13.1-3; 16.13, 16, 25; 20.36; 21.5; 22.17; 28.8. On prayer in Acts, see P.T. O'Brien, 'Prayer in Luke–Acts', *TynBul* 24 (1973), pp. 121-26; S.F. Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke–Acts* (AUS, 7.118; New York: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 75-101, 110-15.

66. Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 137-39.

model for discipleship.[67] Feldkämper, on the other hand, noticed how prayer serves a christological purpose in Luke, highlighting Jesus' relationship to God as Son.[68] Furthermore, prayer occurs at key points in the narrative in order to depict Jesus as the bringer of salvation.[69] This latter point has been developed further by Trites,[70] O'Brien[71] and Smalley.[72] Prayer occurs at key points in the narrative, thereby emphasizing God's direction and empowerment of his servants for mission.

More recently, S.F. Plymale discusses how prayer unites Luke's schema of Israel/Jesus/church, as well as preparing for the fourth stage of salvation history—the consummation. Prayer enables this stage to be faced with confidence (Lk. 23.46; Acts 7.59).[73]

In a recent monograph, D.M. Crump leads the study of prayer in Luke–Acts in new directions. He agrees that there is both a paradigmatic and a salvation-historical purpose in Luke's presentation of prayer. However, the latter should not be seen as the means by which God accomplishes salvation, but the way by which individuals are attuned to God's plan of salvation. Nevertheless, the focus of Crump's thesis is elsewhere. He contends that Luke wants to provide the biographical material necessary to justify the church's contention that Jesus is the heavenly intercessor for God's people (Rom. 8.34; Heb. 7.25; 1 Jn 2.1). In Jewish thought, such an intercessor must have lived a life characterized by powerful prayer. Thus Luke presents Jesus as one who fulfils this prerequisite.[74]

67. See especially L. Monloubou, *La prière selon Saint Luc: Recherche d'une structure* (Paris: Cerf, 1976); George, *Luc*, pp. 395-427; A.A. Trites, 'The Prayer Motif in Luke–Acts', in Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke–Acts*, pp. 168-86.

68. Also noted by Navone, *Themes*, p. 121; J.B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (NTT; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 60.

69. L. Feldkämper, *Der betende Jesus als Heilsmittler nach Lukas* (Bonn: Steyler, 1978) (I have not seen this study and have relied on the summary provided by Crump).

70. Trites, 'Prayer', pp. 168-86.

71. O'Brien, 'Prayer', pp. 111-27.

72. S. Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer in Luke–Acts', *NovT* 15 (1973), pp. 59-71.

73. Plymale, *Prayer Texts*, who notes how this unity of salvation history is portrayed within the prayer of Simeon (2.29-32) (p. 106). See also Plymale's previous article, 'Luke's Theology of Prayer', in Lull (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1990*, pp. 529-51.

74. D.M. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke–Acts*

In the Lukan parables, however, the focus is parenetic rather than christological. Luke presents a picture of God that is designed to encourage his readers to pray. The Friend at Midnight (11.5-8) emphasizes that God is approachable no matter how extreme the request. Thus the Christian can pray with boldness, confidence and assurance. The Unjust Judge (18.1-8) again teaches the willingness of God to respond to the requests of his people, although the emphasis here is on persistence. For Luke, persistence in prayer is a mark of faithfulness (18.8b).

5. *Repentance*

A theme common to many of the parables that we have examined is that of repentance. This is explicit in the Barren Fig Tree (13.6-9; cf. 13.1-5) where, in the context of unfruitfulness, the period of grace is said to be limited. The need for human response is also emphasized in the Great Feast (14.15-24), even though repentance is not mentioned as such. The Parables of the Lost carry both implicit (15.4-10) and explicit (15.11-24) images of repentance. Although this point is disputed by some, it is definitely suggested by both the narrative and the imagery in 15.11-24. In the analysis of the Dishonest Manager (16.1-13), it was proposed that the original sense of the parable was probably the need for urgent decision in the face of eschatological crisis although, admittedly, this has been muted somewhat in the Lukan setting. We have already seen that a lack of repentance was the basis for the reversal of fortunes in the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31), with repentance defined in this context in terms of a proper use of wealth and concern for the poor. Finally, in the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (18.9-14), true righteousness is signified by a repentant heart, not by external piety. The restoration of a relationship with God therefore demands a personal response.

In Luke–Acts repentance is implied in a number of terms, including δέχομαι (8.13; 18.15-17; Acts 11.1), ἀκούω (8.14-15), πιστεύω (8.12; Acts 13.38-39; 17.12-13; 18.8) and ἐπιστρέφω (1.16; Acts 3.18-19; 14.15; 26.16-20; 28.27).[75] Bearing this in mind, it is noteworthy that the primary function of John the Baptist was to turn (1.16, ἐπιστρέφω) Israel back to God.[76] This finds concrete expression in his preaching of

(WUNT, 2.49; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992).

75. See George, *Luc*, pp. 351-55.

76. Luke utilizes the repentance theme to unite John's ministry with the entire

a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (3.3). Turning to the ministry of Jesus, Luke certainly understood that the fundamental purpose of his kingdom mission was to call sinners to repentance (5.29-32; cf. 19.10). So strong was this purpose that Jesus refused to be diverted by issues of theodicy and personal suffering, urging instead the need for personal repentance before disaster overtakes (13.1-5). The ultimate disaster is, of course, that of judgment and hell-fire (12.4-5). Consequently, outstanding matters must be settled before the judge is called upon to determine one's fate (12.57-59).[77]

It has often been stated that Luke has a moral view of repentance.[78] This can be a rather circular argument, as shown in Carlston's assumption that 15.11-32 portrays a non-Lukan view of repentance.[79] Furthermore, this view proposes that a full understanding of repentance must be represented in every instance. The most we can say is that, in contrast to the other synoptics, Luke certainly has a strong emphasis on repentance,[80] and that he is keen to underline the necessity of a changed lifestyle as a result,[81] particularly with respect to the use of wealth and possessions.[82] All these features are prominent in the Lukan parables.

two-volume work, for not only is repentance integral to the message of Jesus (in the Gospel) and the apostles (in Acts), both John's ministry and elements of the Isaiah quotation used in Lk. 3.4-6 are recalled in Acts (2.40; 13.10, 24). See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 48-50.

77. Thus confirming the claim of Pittner (*Sondergut*, pp. 64-68) that in the *Sondergut* texts the call to repentance is not based on the arrival of the kingdom but on individual fate.

78. For example U. Wilckens, *Die Missionsreden der Apostelgeschichte* (WMANT, 5; Neukirchen–Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 3rd rev. edn, 1974), pp. 178-86; Carlston, 'Reminiscence', pp. 384-85.

79. Carlston, 'Reminiscence', pp. 384-85.

80. Carlston ('Reminiscence', p. 384) notes that ἐπιστροφή (in a religious sense) and μετάνοια cognates appear 13 times in Matthew and Mark, and 39 times in Luke–Acts.

81. See George, *Luc*, pp. 359-64. Note also Marshall, *Historian*, pp. 193-95, who argues that Luke introduces no new features to repentance, for it always has a moral aspect; also Schottroff, 'Verlorenen Sohn', pp. 30-31, who believes that the moral aspect in Luke's understanding has been overestimated.

82. F. Bovon, 'Le Dieu de Luc', *RSR* 69 (1981), p. 292.

6. *Reversal*

The motif of reversal[83] is linked to the larger theme of the plan of God,[84] for it is part of the means by which God works. As such, God is the 'overruler of human authority and purpose',[85] for the values and expectations of society, including the questions of who is acceptable to God, ethnic relations, and the nature of the mission of the Messiah, are overturned. Specifically, reversal works in the context of an honour/shame culture, where God reverses human honour systems when such systems act contrary to his nature and desire.[86] Often, reversal is revealed in ironical ways: the disciples explain to Jesus about Jesus' death and resurrection (24.15-24), Jesus is killed by the Jews but God's purpose is fulfilled.[87]

While some studies on reversal focus on the literary effect of the theme upon the hearer or reader,[88] J.O. York focuses on eschatological

83. On the reversal theme in Luke, see Brawley, *God*, pp. 182-211 (who looks at reversal as part of the wider narrative theme of antithesis); J.O. York, *The Last Shall be First: The Rhetoric of Reversal in Luke* (JSNTSup, 46; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). For an examination of the theme as it relates specifically to the rich and poor, see Schottroff and Stegemann, *Hope of the Poor*, pp. 30-47; Nickelsburg, 'Riches', pp. 324-44. F.W. Danker (*Luke* [Proclamation Commentaries; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2nd rev. edn, 1987], pp. 47-57) examines the theme in light of Greco-Roman parallels and concludes that Luke's audience would be familiar with the idea even without a knowledge of the Old Testament (confirmed by York, *Reversal*, pp. 164-84).

84. The motif of the plan of God is discussed further in Chapter 14, Section 1, below.

85. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 30.

86. York, *Reversal*, p. 162.

87. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 194; W.S. Kurz, *Reading Luke–Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), pp. 136-47.

88. This literary effect is discussed by W. Doty, 'The Parables of Jesus, Kafka, Borges, and Others, with Structural Observations', *Semeia* 2 (1974), p. 171, who discusses reversal as a structural phenomenon that is used towards the end of a narrative as a shock feature designed to shatter previous notions; and Crossan, *In Parables*, pp. 53-57, who discusses the parables of reversal in terms of the radical inbreaking of the kingdom into human consciousness. R. Tannehill ('Attitudinal Shift in Synoptic Pronouncement Stories', in R.A. Spencer [ed.], *Orientation by Disorientation* [PTMS, 35; Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1980], pp. 183-97) analyses the same features in the pronouncement stories.

reversal itself. He concludes that the theme operates in the context of the now/not-yet tension of the kingdom. Reversal does occur in the present, but there is a final eschatological element to come. In other words, reversal has real temporal and eschatological consequences.[89]

The Infancy Narratives are typically paradigmatic for what follows. God reverses the fortunes of the mighty and the lowly (1.51-53), and the reader is informed that the Christ-child is destined to effect the rise and fall of many in Israel (2.34). Furthermore, in the account of John the Baptist (3.4-6), Luke alone continues the Isaiah quote to include 40.4, 5b concerning the reversal of the landscape, which probably should be seen as a further comment on the humbling of the proud and the repentance of sinners.[90]

Both in the Nazareth announcement (4.18-21) and the Beatitudes (6.20-24), Jesus defines his kingdom ministry in terms of reversal, thereby echoing the statements in the Magnificat. It quickly becomes apparent that the poor, marginalized, sick, demon-possessed and sinners, that is, those considered as outsiders, are those who are destined to rise in Israel (2.34). Brawley notes that to be 'inside' is thus a precarious position, for insiders are in the habit of becoming outsiders. However, reversal is neither automatic nor infinite, for it ultimately depends on a proper response to God's revelation in Jesus.[91] Consequently, 'the ironic reversal of outside/inside has stability only in God'.[92]

The theme of reversal can also be found in the pronouncement regarding saving and losing one's life (9.23-27), the wisdom pronouncements regarding humiliation and exaltation (14.11; 18.14b) and the first and last (13.30), the greatest becoming servants (22.24-27), the revelation to babes (10.21-22), the revealing of secret things (12.1-3), and the destruction of the beautiful temple (21.5-6). The ultimate reversal is seen in the resurrection of the Crucified One (24.26, 46; Acts 2.29-36; 3.15) or, put metaphorically, in the builders' rejection of the corner-stone (20.17-18).

89. York, *Reversal*, pp. 160-63, 182-83. York does not deny that the theme also functions as a challenge to Luke's readers to embrace the value system of God.

90. Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, p. 105; Klostermann, *Lukasevangelium*, p. 415; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 137; D.L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup, 12; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 93-99.

91. Brawley, *God*, pp. 210-11; York, *Reversal*, p. 162.

92. Brawley, *God*, p. 211.

The parables of the Lukan *Sondergut* make an important contribution to the theme of reversal, for they demonstrate the basis upon which reversal takes place. The Samaritan (implicitly) has life because he fulfilled the love command, whereas the religious insiders do not (10.25-37). In the Great Feast (14.15-24), the invited exclude themselves because they refuse to attend the banquet.[93] The estranged younger son is welcomed and restored on the basis of his return to the father (15.11-24). The rich man is consigned to torment because he did not repent (16.27-31). The tax-collector's contrition before God resulted in his acceptance, while the self-righteous and exclusive attitude of the Pharisee is condemned (18.9-14).

7. *The Question of a Unifying Theme—The Character of God*

So far we have examined several themes that emerge from the Lukan parables, themes that are also prominent elsewhere in Luke–Acts. But the question remains as to why Luke chose these particular parables. This could be answered simply by reference to the salient Lukan themes discussed above, for each of the parables reinforces and expounds a motif that not only appears in the immediate literary context, but is important in Luke–Acts as a whole. Nevertheless, is it possible to go beyond this and discover a motif that is common to all the parables?

A solution to this question may lie in the unravelling of the mystery of the Travel Narrative itself. However, at this point in time only a very limited consensus has been reached, and it would be fair to say that most agree that the constituent motifs of the Travel Narrative lack structural integrity.[94]

93. This does not mean that the outcasts are only included in the kingdom because the original invitees refuse. Temporal progression belongs only to the parable.

94. It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse the various structures proposed for the Travel Narrative. For a helpful overview and extensive bibliography see Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 525-31 ('Excursus: The Journey to Jerusalem'); also Evans and Sanders (eds.), *Luke and Scripture*, pp. 70-73; A. Denaux, 'The Delineation of the Lukan Travel Narrative within the Overall Structure of the Gospel of Luke', in C. Focant (ed.), *The Synoptic Gospels* (BETL, 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993), pp. 357-92. Most would agree that the journey is theological and that discipleship is the main concern in this section. Beyond this, no consensus exists as to the limits of the section, the precise function of the journey motif, or its

Approaching the issue from a source-critical level, it could be argued that Luke simply reproduced the parables as he found them in his parable source. This is the proposal offered by Blomberg, who argues that the parables of the Travel Narrative reflect a chiastic structure that is pre-Lukan. Luke has reproduced this structure and then slotted teaching of a similar focus around each particular parable. This is what gives the Travel Narrative its disorderly appearance.[95] However, apart from at least one doubtful pairing in Blomberg's structure,[96] we must still contend with the possibility that Luke omitted some parables that belonged to the tradition available to him (as with his editing of Mark's parable chapter). Furthermore, the fact that Luke included these parables indicates that they were of particular interest to him in his presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus.

It is somewhat striking that none of the parables is explicitly a kingdom parable (though, of course, all relate to the kingdom in some way), and consequently it would be inaccurate to think of the kingdom as a unifying theme.[97] Parrott sees repentance as the unifying motif; in particular, the emphasis upon the exaltation of the repentant and the humbling of the unrepentant. He also notes how the pericopes of 7.36-50 and 18.9-14 bracket the parables of this theme.[98] However, although repentance is certainly a common and important theme, it is hardly a universal or unifying element. For example, Parrott's attempt to interpret the Friend at Midnight (11.5-8) in terms of the repentant sinner being accepted by God is surely forced.

internal structure (a number of chiasms have been proposed but are vastly different).

95. Blomberg, 'Chiasmus', pp. 240-48.

96. Blomberg pairs 11.11-13 with 17.7-10 on the basis of the common τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν introduction. However, we may legitimately question whether 11.11-13 should be treated as a parable.

97. Petzke, *Sondergut*, pp. 217-21. See also K. Paffenroth, *The Story of Jesus according to L* (JSNTSup, 147; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 97-104, who draws attention to the following formal distinctives in the Lukan parables: 1) analogies are drawn more from human relationships than from nature and agriculture; 2) less allegory than other synoptic parables; 3) frequent use of dialogue/monologue within the parable; 4) use of questions; 5) use of *a fortiori* argument; and 6) they are not properly designated as kingdom parables. Paffenroth concludes that these parables are part of a pre-Lukan parable source that existed in L (a single source), for Luke does not redact Mark or Q in any of the above directions.

98. Parrott, 'Dishonest Steward', pp. 509-10.

There is, however, another possibility that has surfaced repeatedly in the discussion so far. In the detailed analysis of the parables, I noted that in every case[99] God appears either directly (Rich Fool, Pharisee and the Tax-Collector, Rich Man and Lazarus [behind the figure of Abraham]) or indirectly (as householder [11.5-8], owner [13.6-9; 16.1-8], host of the banquet [14.15-24], shepherd[100] [15.4-10], searching woman [15.7-10], father [15.11-32], or judge [18.1-8]). Granted, this is not all that strange, since in most of the synoptic parables God appears in some form[101] (the exceptions being the Treasure in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price [Mt. 13.44-46]). Nevertheless, the Lukan parables present some distinctive characteristics.

In the Matthean parables, God as judge is a dominant feature. In this respect, Erlemann shows how many of Matthew's parables begin with a particular metaphor for God,[102] but then conclude with a judging function.[103] Thus Matthew's focus is more on the eschaton (that is, more apocalyptic), and his descriptions of judgment in the parables fit with the heavy emphasis on judgment and eternal punishment in his Gospel.[104] Luke, on the other hand, downplays this feature.[105] His focus is oriented more towards the present,[106] stressing the universal concern

99. The only exception being the parable of the Good Samaritan—but in this case the Samaritan echoes the character of God.

100. One could argue that Jesus is the shepherd. The issue of Christology will be discussed below. In the meantime, I will continue to refer to the figure or character of God in the parables, with the understanding that God is sometimes portrayed through Jesus.

101. As acknowledged by Via, *Parables*, p. 57; Blomberg, 'Where Are We?', pp. 75-76.

102. Mt. 13.24-30—Sower; 18.23-35—Creditor; 21.33-41—Householder; 22.1-14—Host; 25.1-13—Bridegroom.

103. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 249-54, 283-84. This feature is also noted by P. Grelot, *Dieu, le père de Jésus Christ* (Paris: Desclée, 1994), pp. 101-102.

104. Grelot, *Dieu*, pp. 103-106.

105. The exceptions are, notably, the parables dealing with a right attitude to wealth and possessions (12.13-21; 16.19-31; 19.11-27). Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, p. 284) also observes that the focus on judgment in 19.11-27 at the end of the Travel Narrative serves to stress the ultimate importance of acknowledging Jesus as king.

106. Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 252-53) notes how the different time period portrayed in a parable gives a different presentation of God. Phase 1 is the most varied, where God entrusts property or sows seed, for example. This is the direct contact phase. Phase 2 focuses on human response. This is the time of proving,

of God, mercy and repentance.[107] Erlemann is also correct in noting that, for Luke, humans control their own destiny. It is they who include or exclude themselves from God's kingdom (14.15-24; 15.11-32; 16.1-31).[108]

Because of this different focus, Luke gives a more varied presentation of the character of God in the parables than do Matthew and Mark. Apart from Matthew's apocalyptic focus discussed above, this may also be explained by the fact that the majority of the parables in Matthew and Mark are kingdom parables, which tend to say very little about the character and nature of God himself (Luke reproduces only two kingdom similes [13.18-21]). Similarly, the parable of the Sower, in which God/Jesus can be viewed as the sower of the word, focuses on the types of human response rather than on the character of the sower.

Of course it would be incorrect to argue that the picture of God that emerges from the Matthean and Markan parables is strictly limited to a judging function. We get a glimpse of God as a gracious master in the Labourers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20.1-16), two brief portrayals of mercy (Mt. 18.10-13, 23-35), and a depiction of God's patience prior to executing judgment (the Wicked Tenants—Mk 12.1-12 pars.). However, I submit that the Lukan parables are unique in their consistent, varied and developed portrayal of the character and nature of God. This is further evidenced by the fact that even where Luke employs the same titular metaphors as Matthew and Mark, he develops them differently and more extensively.[109] For instance, God as father appears in Mt. 22.1-14 and Mk 12.1-12 pars. In the former, although it is the father who gives a feast for his son, the king image actually dominates the parable. In the latter, although the father sends his son to the vineyard, the master of the vineyard dominates the imagery. In contrast, it is only in Lk. 15.11-32 that the father image is developed. Similarly, in Matthew's parable of the Wedding Feast (22.1-14) the focus is on the punitive action of

where God removes himself to a distance (the '*Nichterfahrbarkeit Gottes*'). Phase 3 is the call to account, where God acts as judge.

107. While neither showing the need for repentance nor reflecting the mercy of God, it is interesting that in the story of the Dishonest Manager (16.1-8), where the expectation is of judgment, we unexpectedly encounter praise.

108. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 255.

109. Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, p. 243) notes that Luke has fewer titular metaphors than Matthew.

the host, whereas in Lk. 14.15-24 his graciousness is emphasized.[110] Overall, in the parables of Matthew and Mark we find nothing on God's concern for the poor and marginalized,[111] nothing on the approachability of God in prayer, and nothing on God's attitude to wealth.[112]

I shall now briefly discuss three fundamental aspects of God's character that emerge from the Lukan parables:[113] his care and love, his mercy and grace, and God as sovereign judge. I shall explore each of these in turn, interacting with material of similar focus in the larger Gospel context.

a) *The Care and Love of God*

The care and love of God are summed up in the simple declaration that God is good (18.17). More specifically, these characteristics are well illustrated in the two parables on prayer. The Friend at Midnight (11.5-8) stresses that God is approachable, even in an extreme situation. Thus, because of the character of God, the believer can be confident and bold in prayer. The Unjust Judge (18.1-8) teaches that God is not aloof and self-serving, but is approachable and concerned. Admittedly 18.7b is difficult, but it was argued that the sense is that God is patient with the repeated requests of his people. There is no limit to prayer.

While certainly not a metaphor for God, the Good Samaritan (10.25-37) reflects the love of God in healing the wounds of the afflicted (cf. Jer. 30.17; Hos. 6.1-6). Moreover, the parable teaches an ethnocentric audience that its views of God need to change, for God's love and care cannot be limited by cultural ideals.

Nor can God's love and acceptance be confined to a particular social group. This is underlined throughout Luke's Gospel by the portrayal of Jesus' care for the poor and marginalized (see above). In the parables,

110. See Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 246-47, who also includes Lk. 15.11-32 in the *Host* imagery.

111. Note Matthew's account of the parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt. 22.1-14), where compared to Luke's host who sends for the 'poor, crippled, lame, and blind', Matthew's host sends the servant out to invite 'everyone that you find' (ὅσους ἐὰν εὕρητε).

112. The parable of the Talents (Mt. 25.14-30) is not about wealth and possessions in the manner that Luke presents the theme. Although there are points of overlap, Luke is concerned more with the dangers of wealth *per se*.

113. I shall not analyse the use of a titular metaphor, or discuss the tradition history of that metaphor, as does Erlemann (for Lk. 14.15-24; 15.11-32; 16.1-8; 19.11-27). Instead, the focus will be on the picture of God's character and nature.

this is seen particularly in the Great Feast (14.15-24), the setting which is given for the parables of the Lost (15.1-2), and the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31).

A vivid illustration of God's care is given in the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (15.4-10), where the lost are actively sought. God places immense value on human beings, even those of apparently little value. Finally, in the Lost Son (15.11-32) we encounter a God who seeks an intimate relationship, not a master–servant association. Here the care and love of God are reflected in the father who treats both sons with equal respect and patience. We also encounter the picture of a God who does not enforce his authority, giving his younger son the freedom to rebel. God does desire perfect community, but this will only be achieved via compassion and joy, not compulsion.[114]

The care and love of God are recurring motifs in the wider Gospel context. In the Infancy Narratives it is observed in his faithfulness to Israel (1.54-55, 68), while Jesus emphasizes that God, who cares even for the sparrows, knows and provides for the needs of his people (12.6-7, 22-31) as their father (6.36; 11.13; 12.30). In addition, he loves to give gifts (the ultimate gift being the Holy Spirit) to his children (11.9-13). Moreover, God's provision extends even to the ungrateful (6.35; cf. Acts 14.17). In a more general sense, God's love and care are seen in the healing and exorcism ministry of Jesus.[115]

b) *God's Mercy and Grace*

Closely tied to God's care and love are his mercy and grace. While it is true that God is merciful to those who fear him (1.50, 54), it is evident that mercy extends even to those who do not. In fact, the mercy shown by God to the wicked is seen as a model for Christian behaviour (6.27-36).[116] The prime examples of this are both Jesus (Lk. 23.34)[117] and

114. Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, p. 139) discusses the presentation of God here as an '*Integrationsfigur*'.

115. Grelot, *Dieu*, p. 122.

116. Note that the Matthean parallel concludes with a command to *perfection*, based on the perfection of God (Mt. 5.48). Although Luke may have wanted to illustrate the Father's perfection in terms of his mercy, it is likely that he has preserved the original saying (so J. Dupont, '"Soyez parfaits" [Mt. V,48], "Soyez miséricordieux" [Lc. VI,36]', in Coppens *et al.* [eds.], *Sacra Pagina II* [BETL, 13; Paris: Gabalda, 1959], pp. 150-62; Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, I, p. 360; Schulz, *Die Spruchquelle*, p. 130; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 265; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 300).

117. The originality of this verse is doubted. However, although its omission is

Stephen (Acts 7.60), who request mercy upon those who are responsible for their death.

Undeniably, the main focus of God's mercy is seen in his forgiveness of human sin (1.77-78; 11.4; Acts 2.21; 15.9). In the parables, this is first encountered in the Barren Fig Tree (13.6-9), where a period of grace is granted to enable repentance.[118] However, this period is limited, for God's justice demands punishment; unfruitfulness must be dealt with. Undoubtably, the treatment par excellence of God's mercy is found in the Lost Son (15.11-32) where, in the atypical actions of the father, we encounter the extraordinary nature of God's pardoning love and acceptance. Both these parables clearly demonstrate that God does not delight in the downfall of the wicked, with the latter picturing God rejoicing over their return. This image of a God who rejoices over the lost-now-found is unique in the parables of Jesus. Moreover, we note that in 15.11-32 the father metaphor loses its exclusive character. God is now the universal father, rather than merely the father of the pious.[119] This fact also comes to expression (though without the father metaphor) in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector (18.9-14). Here mercy is granted in response to humility and confession, not in response to human merit or achievement. God's mercy is not governed by religious piety or tradition.

A final feature of God's grace is that he respects human choice. He allows people to refuse to come to the banquet (14.15-24) and leaves them to run away to the far country (15.11-24). Nevertheless, he is always ready to welcome them home.

c) *God as Sovereign Judge*

The reverse side of the coin to mercy and grace is judgment. God longs for people to repent and to seek him, but there are consequences if accounts are not settled before the period of grace expires (12.57-59;[120] 13.1-9). Thus there are a number of warnings regarding judgment and

early and widespread (P^{75} A^1 B D W Q 170 579 etc.), the parallel in Acts 7.60 with Stephen makes it possible (given the parallels that Luke draws between Jesus and Stephen—see O'Toole, *Luke's Theology,* pp. 63-72) that Luke knew of the tradition that associated this verse with Jesus (so Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 1141-42).

118. In focusing upon the severity of the master's judgment, Grelot (*Dieu*, p. 102) overlooks this aspect of the parable.

119. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 150.

120. It is possible here to see God as both judge and accuser (so Schulz, *Die Spruchquelle*, pp. 423-24).

hell-fire (3.17; 10.13-16; 12.5; 13.22-30; Acts 10.42; 17.31).

In the Lukan parables, accountability to God in the face of eschatological judgment is mainly emphasized in conjunction with the proper use of wealth and possessions. This is seen in the Rich Fool (12.13-21), the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31), the Pounds (19.11-27; cf. 12.39-48)[121] and possibly the Dishonest Manager (16.1-13).[122] Thus, while the judgment theme is not distinctively Lukan, the contexts in which it appears give this Gospel a unique flavour. God as judge is also implied in the vindication that he will grant to his people (18.1-8), the verdict granted to the tax-collector (18.9-14), and the pronouncement of exclusion against all those who refuse his personal invitation to the eschatological banquet (14.15-24).

The sovereignty of God is also depicted in the references to him as the all-powerful God (1.37; 18.27; cf. Acts 5.39) who controls history, and who empowers his servants for mission (4.14; 5.17; 24.49; cf. Acts 10.38; 14.3).

Summarizing the results of this chapter so far, we have explored a number of themes that emerge from the Lukan parables: namely the use of wealth and possessions, concern for the poor, conflict, prayer, reversal and repentance. We then asked whether a unifying theme could be found, one that would explain the attraction of these particular parables for Luke. While their usefulness might have been determined in the reinforcing of the individual themes they contain, we also discovered that all the parables contain either an implicit or explicit depiction of God, illustrating in each case something of his character and nature.

However, apart from the fact that each parable presents us with a picture of God, it is also apparent that the person and character of God is implied (to various degrees) in all the theological themes that derive from a parable. In other words, it is the nature and character of God that unifies the parables both internally, and also in relation to one another.

For example, prayer is based on beliefs and convictions about how God will respond. A proper understanding of God's willingness to listen and power to act is, therefore, not only integral to effective prayer, but is also a basic prerequisite for prayer to happen. Similarly, repen-

121. This parable was not discussed in Part II due to the limits of space, and also its similarity to other synoptic parables in its portrayal of the character of God.

122. The role of God in this parable is disputed. See the discussion on the parable in Part II.

tance is based on two characteristics of God: God as judge who demands punishment for sin, and the mercy of a God who welcomes and forgives. Concern for the poor and marginalized is designed to mirror the concern of God, for it is fundamental to God's character that he champions the cause of the underprivileged (Deut. 10.18; Amos 2.6-8; Mic. 6.8). A proper attitude to wealth and possessions is inseparably linked with God's concern for the poor and marginalized, in addition to the fact of ultimate accountability to God as the eschatological judge. Moreover, God himself must be the source of one's security, not wealth and possessions. Reversal is linked to a number of characteristics of God. God's justice demands that the arrogant and proud be humbled, while in his mercy he elevates the lowly. Both, of course, are ultimately based on God's power to act. Finally, controversy in the Lukan parables can be understood as part of God's care and mercy for his people. He does not abandon them to their misguided notions, but seeks to correct them.[123] Fundamentally, their view of God needs to change. Other conflict passages are linked to God as sovereign judge, for persistence in unbelief and a continuing rejection of the message of Jesus must result in judgment.

At this point, one may legitimately respond that the character of God as an internal link is not that surprising, for logically (at a theological level) there must be a foundational theme that gives rise to all the others. Again, however, what is unique in the Lukan parables is the variety and profundity of the themes, which together serve to present the reader with a far more comprehensive portrayal of God's character than do the parables in Matthew and Mark.

Without doubt, therefore, Luke–Acts is a theocentric story.[124] In this regard Brawley observes, 'The world of God in relation to human beings comes to expression through models that produce figures of God accompanying humanity'.[125] In many cases, these models are parables in which some action or characteristic of God is conveyed by means of a character whose referent is God. Furthermore, in some of these models an unreliable or dubious character acts as a foil for a more correct evaluation of God.[126] Thus, 'God is a character whom the reader

123. Understood in these terms, the parables are not so much statements about the Jews, but are testimonies to the faithfulness of God.

124. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, p. 29.

125. Brawley, *God*, p. 39, following Ricoeur.

126. Brawley, *God*, p. 112.

constructs out of the intersection of information, action, traits, and evaluation'.[127]

Before moving on, we need briefly to discuss the issue of Christology, for clearly a discussion about the character of God in the parables is incomplete without a recognition that Jesus mirrors this character in his own person.

8. *The Christology of the Parables*

The purpose here is not to discuss Luke's Christology in detail, but briefly to assess what role Christology plays in the parables that we have examined.

Jülicher's categorical rejection of allegory meant that it was just as difficult to speak of christological features in the parables as it was to speak of depictions of God. However, recognition of the christological dimension of the parables was given impetus by the new hermeneutic, which understood the parables as language events by which the hearer or reader experiences God. It was Fuchs who recognized that God's grace is often encountered through a meeting with Jesus in parable.[128] This was endorsed by Jeremias, who agreed that the parables contain a 'veiled self-attestation'. The portrayal of God becomes actualized in Jesus himself.[129]

It is clear that Jesus acted and taught in the way he did because of his filial self-consciousness and his understanding of his revelatory mission. It is because God is like he is that Jesus acts the way he does,[130] for he has no other basis for his actions and teaching than in the character of God.[131] Thus Jesus becomes 'an exegete of the will of God'.[132] This is confirmed by the comments of the people (7.16) and the Lukan narrator (9.43), that in Jesus God has visited his people (cf. 1.68-78; Jn 1.18).

127. Brawley, *God*, p. 111.

128. E. Fuchs, 'Bermerkungen zur Gleichnisauslegung', *TLZ* 79 (1954), pp. 345-48. See also J.M. Robinson, 'Jesus' Parables as God Happening', in F.T. Trotter (ed.), *Jesus and the Historian* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), p. 140.

129. Jeremias, *Parables*, p. 230 n.1.

130. Hunter, *Interpreting*, p. 51.

131. K.P. Jörns, 'Die Gleichnisverkündigung Jesu: Reden von Gott als Wort Gottes', in E. Lohse *et al.* (eds.), *Der Ruf Jesu und die Antwort der Gemeinde* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), p. 160.

132. Scholz, *Gleichnisaussage*, p. 304, quoting H. Schürmann.

The parables become, therefore, part of the means by which Jesus mediates God to humanity. M. Petzoldt shows how, in this sense, the parables may be considered a risk. They initially separate Jesus from his hearers, then attempt to bind them to him.[133] The parables are thus a vehicle by which Jesus proclaims the gospel, for they are a door behind which lies a new light of belief.[134] The parables are the *viva vox evangelii.*[135]

G. Baudler aptly describes the parables as an 'inner biography of Jesus', a form of existential address that confronts the reader with the person of Jesus. However, Baudler's emphasis on the kingdom as existential confrontation leads him to downplay the moral-ethical dimension of the parables. Furthermore, in Baudler's hands, all the parables are forced into a paradigm that portrays the work of Jesus, rather than being allowed to illustrate other theological concepts.[136]

Nowadays, most would be prepared to accept the view that the parables contain an implicit Christology. Nevertheless, 'Christology' is at times a rather nebulous term that, for some, need not signify anything more than Jesus' understanding of his mission as the authorized representative of God.[137] There is also the issue of whether this implicit

133. Petzoldt, *Gleichnisse*, pp. 129-30.

134. G. Baudler, *Jesus im Spiegel seiner Gleichnisse* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1986), p. 30.

135. Petzoldt, *Gleichnisse*, p. 11; Baudler, *Jesus*, p. 33.

136. Baudler divides the parables into three categories: 1) *Weckgleichnisse* (those that seek to awaken the realization of the dawning of the kingdom); 2) *Kampfgleichnisse* (those that deal with a conflict situation, whereby Jesus seeks to overcome objections to his ministry); and 3) *Passionsgleichnisse* (conflict cannot be overcome but results in Jesus' death and resurrection). The restrictive nature of his paradigm is seen in his analysis of the Dishonest Manager (Lk. 16.1-8), where Jesus is the manager who is accused by the religious authorities of squandering the religious traditions of Israel. God (the owner) appears for a time to be on the side of the opponents (as in the prophetic tradition reflected in Jer. 15.10); however, he ultimately vindicates his servant (seen in his overcoming of death). The parable is thus told from the perspective of Jesus' opponents, and is his answer to those who rebuke him (see *Jesus*, pp. 217-30). However, not only does Baudler's view of this parable run aground on a number of internal difficulties (see the analysis of the parable in Part II), it clearly does not have this sense in its Lukan setting.

137. This is the approach taken by Nützel, *Jesus*, pp. 234-70, whose discussion of the Lukan parables centres around Jesus' work as a revelation of God's action, rather than the implications of this for Jesus' self-understanding. See also J.J. Vincent, 'The Parables of Jesus as Self-Revelation', *SE* I (= TU 73) (1959), pp. 77-99;

Christology was a deliberate but veiled attempt by Jesus to define his person, or merely a natural product of his relationship with God.[138] P.B. Payne, however, goes further and speaks of Jesus' implicit claim to deity in his parables. He points out that such self-portrayal is unique compared with the rabbinic parables, and that Jesus represents himself by employing a number of images that are used of God in the Old Testament (for example, sower, rock, shepherd, king, father, bridegroom). Jesus thereby not only claims to do the work of God, it is difficult to escape the fact that, in some sense, he regards himself as God.[139]

For the purposes of this study, we need only make the following points. First, in his parabolic teaching Jesus primarily intends to expound the nature of God and his kingdom. We have seen that in the Lukan parables the emphasis falls, in this regard, on the nature of God. Second, since Jesus mirrors the character and actions of God, we would expect that the images used for God would therefore be applicable to Jesus himself (for example, shepherd [15.4-7], father [15.11-32], judge [18.1-8]). Third, because this is so, Jesus intends his audience to reflect closely on the nature of his person and mission, and ultimately to embrace his teaching. Blomberg's conclusion is appropriate:

> By consistently utilizing stock metaphors for God to justify his own actions, Jesus does not explicitly link himself with his parables' characters by direct allegorical equation. But he does invite his audience to consider that if various figures in his narratives stand for God, and if

Tinsley, 'Self-Awareness', pp. 18-27. Note also Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 37-41, who, in his analysis of the *son* metaphor in the parables, focuses his discussion on the tradition history of the concept. He concludes that the origin of this *Metaphernübertragung* lies in the ancient Near Eastern concept of the one being sent reflecting the characteristics of the sender (cf. Exod. 23.21; Isa. 59.21; *1 En.* 55.4; 61.8-9). See further the discussion in Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 316-19.

138. Jörns ('Gleichnisverkündigung', pp. 157-78) tends toward the former understanding when he speaks of the 'surprising nearness' that this has to the ἐγὼ εἰμί introductions of John's Gospel (p. 160). See also J.R. Michaels, *Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 101-109.

139. Payne, 'Claims to Deity', pp. 3-23. Payne argues that because these symbols are not interpreted as divine claims by the Evangelists, their claim to authenticity is strong (p. 18). See also H. Frankemölle, 'Hat Jesus sich selbst verkündet? Christologische Implikationen in den vormarkinischen Parabeln', *BibLeb* 13 (1972), pp. 184-207, who shows that an implicit Christology is evident in the pre-Markan stages of the tradition.

> Jesus acts as God does, then in some sense Jesus must be claiming divine prerogatives.[140]

I shall continue, therefore, to speak of the nature and character of God in the parables, with the understanding that, at times, there is an overlap between the depiction of God and the person of Jesus that enables a transfer of a particular metaphor from one to the other.[141]

Having established the importance of the character and nature of God in the Lukan parables, the ultimate aim will be to examine what relationship this has to Luke's overall purpose. But, given the prominence of the theme of promise and fulfilment in this Gospel and the necessity of analysing this theme in attempting to establish Luke's purpose, it may prove instructive to first of all analyse our findings to date in light of the promise-fulfilment motif. If Luke is concerned to show that Christianity is indeed the fulfilment of the Old Testament and Jewish hope of salvation, then what role does Jesus' depiction of God in the Lukan parables play in this concern?

140. Blomberg, *Parables*, pp. 323-24.
141. Grelot, *Dieu*, p. 101.

Chapter 14

THE LUKAN PARABLES AND LUKE'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. *Introduction*

The rationale for examining Luke's use of the Old Testament at this point in the argument arises from the proposal of the previous chapter. If the character of God functions as the unifying theme for the Lukan parables, both in the sense that it unites the internal themes of a particular parable, and in providing a common link between all the parables, then it seems reasonably obvious, given Luke's theology of history, that this presentation of the character and nature of God would have its basis in the history and theology of Israel. Consequently we will now examine the prominent Lukan motif of promise-fulfilment and seek to ascertain if and how the parables complement this particular motif. Hopefully we will then be closer to determining the role played by the parables in Luke's overall purpose.

The narrative of Luke–Acts certainly begins 'mid-story',[1] for Luke does not merely tell a story about Jesus, but about God and the realization of his plan.[2] This plan unfolds as that of universal salvation.[3] J.T. Squires has thoroughly researched the motif of the plan of God in Luke–Acts by investigating five key sub-themes, themes that are evident to some extent in both Hellenistic historiography and Josephus.[4] These themes are *providence* (God working in history), *portents* (the

1. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 18, 294.

2. Note the emphasis on the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk. 7.29-30; Acts 2.23; 4.28; 5.28-32; 13.36; 20.27).

3. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 2-3, who regards the βουλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ as the unifying narrative theme of Luke–Acts. Marshall (*Historian*, pp. 103-15) also discusses the key theme of the divine plan in Luke–Acts, but regards the purpose of the plan (i.e. salvation) as the central motif of Lukan theology (pp. 92, 216).

4. J.T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS, 76; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

intervention of God via the miraculous), *epiphanies* (appearances of God or his agent to give direct guidance), *prophecy* (promise-fulfilment), and *fate* (the divine necessity[5] of certain events). Squires contends that the theme of the plan of God is the central theme of Luke–Acts, for it undergirds all the key events of the narrative, especially the passion and the Gentile mission.[6] In this chapter we will not be so much concerned with the theme of the plan of God as a whole, but with the subsidiary motif of prophecy and fulfilment, especially as this relates to Luke's use of the Old Testament.

No one today doubts that Luke is concerned with salvation history, that is, history understood from the perspective of God's saving action. However, Conzelmann's rigid threefold schema of Israel/Jesus/church, with the associated idea of a crisis over the delay of the parousia,[7] has been vigorously criticized (to the point where it should be laid to rest),[8] with salvation history now understood more in terms of promise-fulfilment. Throughout his work Luke is concerned to illustrate that the events surrounding the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus—and in Acts the ministry of the church empowered by the Spirit—are not only part of the divine plan, but are the fulfilment of ancient and not-so-ancient promises.[9]

5. On the use of δεῖ in Luke-Acts, see C.H. Cosgrove, 'The Divine ΔEI in Luke–Acts: Investigations into the Lukan Understanding of God's Providence', *NovT* 26 (1984), pp. 168-90. Cosgrove finds that the term is used with respect to: 1) God's ancient plan; 2) a summons to obedience; 3) God's guarantee of his plan (i.e. optimism); 4) a dramatic-comedic aspect (i.e. reversal).

6. Squires, *Plan of God*, pp. 186-87.

7. As proposed in H. Conzelmann, *Die Mitte die Zeit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1954) (ET *The Theology of Saint Luke* [New York: Harper & Row, 1960]).

8. See the discussion of the Conzelmann and post-Conzelmann eras in F. Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Thirty-Three Years of Research (1950–1983)* (Allison Park, PN: Pickwick Press, 1987), pp. 1-77. For a comprehensive critique of Conzelmann, see S.G. Wilson, *Gentiles*, pp. 59-87; Marshall, *Historian*, pp. 77-88; Mattill, *Last Things*, pp. 13-25; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 100-57; H.D. Buckwalter, *The Character and Purpose of Luke's Christology* (SNTSMS, 89; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 206-228; Denova, *The Things Accomplished*, pp. 53-80.

9. The promise-fulfilment theme in Luke–Acts is conveyed not only by utilizing the Old Testament, but also in the fulfilment of narrative predictions. This is particularly evident in the Infancy Narratives regarding the announcements of the birth and role of John and Jesus. However, it also occurs frequently in the predictions made by Jesus himself. See further, Brawley, *God*, pp. 58-85; C.H. Talbert,

So much is clear. However, disagreement exists in two main areas. The first concerns the precise manner in which Luke uses the Old Testament to convey promise-fulfilment, while the second involves the specific purpose for which the theme is employed. Our present task is to investigate these issues with the immediate goal of establishing in what way the parables contribute to our understanding of Luke's use of the promise-fulfilment motif.

2. *Luke's Use of the Old Testament*

Due to the confines and purpose of this book, we will focus on the way in which Luke uses the Old Testament, rather than on the text[10] or the sources that Luke may have drawn upon.[11] A quite common understanding of Luke's use of the Old Testament is that of *proof from prophecy*, whereby the promise-fulfilment theme is used for apologetic purposes in order to legitimize the gospel. This view is evident in the earlier works of Cadbury,[12] Conzelmann[13] and Lohse,[14] although it was brought to prominence by P. Schubert who coined the actual phrase.[15]

'Promise and Fulfilment in Lucan Theology', in *idem* (ed.), *New Perspectives*, pp. 91-103; B.C. Frein, 'Narrative Predictions, Old Testament Prophecies and Luke's Sense of Fulfilment', *NTS* 40 (1994), pp. 22-37.

10. The seminal works are W.K.L. Clark, 'The Use of the Septuagint in Acts', in F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1—The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1922), II, pp. 66-105 (confined to Acts); T. Holtz, *Untersuchungen über die alttestamentlichen Zitae bei Lukas* (TU, 104; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968). See also Bovon, *Luke the Theologian*, pp. 95-104; Bock, *Proclamation*, pp. 13-16; J.A. Fitzmyer, 'The Use of the Old Testament in Luke–Acts', in E.H. Lovering Jr (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1992* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992).

11. Bock (*Proclamation*, pp. 16-27) has a summary and evaluation of research regarding possible sources. H. Ringgren ('Luke's Use of the Old Testament', *HTR* 79 [1986], pp. 227-35) offers a list of all Old Testament quotations in Luke–Acts plus Old Testament allusions in the Infancy Narratives. He briefly notes the likely source and mentions the synoptic parallels.

12. H.J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke–Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), pp. 303-16.

13. Conzelmann, *St. Luke*, pp. 149-62.

14. E. Lohse, 'Lukas als Theologe der Heilsgeschichte', *EvT* 14 (1954), pp. 256-75.

15. P. Schubert, 'The Structure and Significance of Luke 24', in W. Eltester (ed.), *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann* (BZNW, 21; Berlin: Alfred

Schubert has since received endorsement from Dahl,[16] Franklin,[17] Jervell,[18] J.T. Sanders[19] and Fitzmyer.[20] However, not all are convinced. By separating the 'prophetic' from the 'eschatological', H.H. Oliver argued that eschatology is the key to Luke's theology,[21] whereas A. Ehrhardt claimed that the proof-from-prophecy theme was pre-Lukan and stemmed from Q.[22] M. Rese even called into question the existence of a promise-fulfilment theme in Luke–Acts, arguing that the Old Testament is used in a number of ways, most of which do not fit this schema.[23] More recently, C.H. Talbert has supported Rese by claiming

Töpelmann, 1957), pp. 165-86. Schubert actually felt that the phrase was 'clumsy' (p. 173). Although his focus was on Lk. 24, Schubert argued for the centrality of the proof-from-prophecy theme in Luke–Acts as a whole.

16. N.A. Dahl, 'The Story of Abraham in Luke–Acts', in L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn (eds.), *Studies in Luke–Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 139-58. Although Dahl felt that Luke developed the idea into a leading theme, he believed that it did not originate with Luke.

17. Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, pp. 69-76. It is possible to discern a change of emphasis with Franklin. Although he contends that Luke was trying to argue for his beliefs regarding Jesus, the Old Testament is not primarily used for apologetic purposes but to interpret the Jesus event. The Old Testament is simply the basis for Luke's theology of history, whereby Jesus fulfils God's saving action in the Old Testament. Franklin states, 'The quotations are not peripheral, nor are they "picture fulfilment" alone, but flow into and control the theology of Luke' (p. 75).

18. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, pp. 122-37. Jervell does not actually speak in terms of proof from prophecy, though he does show that, for Luke, the centre of Scripture is its prophetic aspect (which is intrinsically linked to the messianic). Not only Moses (Acts 3.18-21), but even David (Acts 2.30) is a prophet. Similarly, see R.J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word* (AnBib, 82; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), pp. 132-45.

19. J.T. Sanders, 'The Prophetic Use of Scripture in Luke–Acts', in C.A. Evans and W.F. Stinespring (eds.), *Early Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 191-98.

20. Fitzmyer, 'Old Testament', pp. 536-37.

21. H.H. Oliver, 'The Lucan Birth Stories', *NTS* 10 (1963–64), pp. 202-226 (esp. p. 225).

22. A. Ehrhardt, 'The Disciples of Emmaus', *NTS* 10 (1963–64), pp. 182-201.

23. M. Rese, *Alttestamentliche Motive in der Christologie des Lukas* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1969). Rese examines five categories for the use of the Old Testament: 1) description of an event without presenting the Old Testament as prophecy (Acts 2.17-21); 2) typology (Acts 7); 3) proof, but Old Testament not viewed as prophecy (Acts 2.25-28); 4) the present discloses the Old Testament as prophecy (Acts 13.32-35); 5) Old Testament prophecy fulfilled. For a summary and critique of Rese, see

that promise-fulfilment is not the dominant theme of Luke–Acts. He contends that the Old Testament is not always used in this sense, for it often has an ethical dimension concerned with delineating behaviour. Moreover, typology is fundamentally different to prophecy and should not be seen as part of a promise-fulfilment theme. Talbert adds that for Luke, fulfilment is not only linked to the Old Testament, but to prophecies from within the narrative. Finally, he points out that prophecy-fulfilment has parallels in the Mediterranean world and thus it is too big a jump from recognizing this theme to postulating why it was utilized by the author.[24]

In a recent monograph[25] and follow-up essay,[26] D.L. Bock calls into question the findings of Rese and Talbert respectively. In his monograph, Bock incorporates a study of Old Testament quotations, allusions and ideas in order to assess the proof-from-prophecy theme and to challenge the findings of Rese. Bock believes that Rese ignored the traditional Jewish understanding of the texts used by Luke as well as the contexts in which the quotations appear. Furthermore, Rese underestimated the role of Old Testament pattern and typology.[27] Similarly, against Talbert, Bock rejects the separation of typology and prophecy, arguing that Old Testament patterns are 'typological-prophetic'.[28]

Some of the Old Testament patterns discussed by Bock that appear without any citation or editorial comment by Luke include: the birth of John to a barren woman (1.24-25), Jesus born of a virgin (1.26-35), God 'raising up' salvation (1.69—recalls the deliverers of old), the promises to Abraham and David (1.46-55, 67-73), Elijah/Elisha traditions (4.18-21), the chosen Son who is also the prophet to whom the disciples must listen (9.35; cf. Deut. 18.15), the lament over Jerusalem (13.31-35; 19.41-44), the messianic king riding a colt (19.35-38), the Son of Man riding the clouds (21.27; cf. Exod. 14.20; 34.4-5; Num. 10.34; Dan. 7.13), sitting/ruling at the right hand of God (22.69; cf. Ps.

Bock, *Proclamation*, pp. 39-43.

24. Talbert, 'Promise', pp. 91-103.

25. Bock, *Proclamation*. A condensed form of Bock's argument is found in his later article, 'Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Luke's Use of the Old Testament for Christology and Mission', in C.A. Evans and W.R. Stenger (eds.), *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (JSNTSup, 104; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 280-307.

26. Bock, 'Old Testament'. pp. 494-511.

27. Bock, *Proclamation*, pp. 39-43.

28. Bock, 'Old Testament', p. 495.

110.1—already used in Lk. 20.41-44), and the passion and resurrection of the Messiah (24.26-27, 33-37).[29]

Among Bock's more important findings are: 1) Luke is faithful to the concepts contained in the Old Testament text; 2) the use of these Old Testament texts parallels Jewish exegesis[30] where the same texts were seen as messianic/prophetic (in fact Luke is restrained in comparison, preserving the Old Testament context and often interpreting a text literally); 3) the form of Luke's argument is not dependent upon the LXX and may reflect a very early tradition; 4) there is a complex two-way relationship between Old Testament text and New Testament event, whereby the event does not discover the text nor does the text create the event, rather the event interprets the text specifically, in addition to the text clarifying the event. Bock concludes that Luke's use of the Old Testament is not apologetic and thus is not correctly understood as proof from prophecy. Rather, the key is *proclamation from prophecy*

29. See Bock, 'Old Testament', pp. 496-506. The last pattern is the exception, for Luke does introduce the suffering and glorification of the Messiah as fulfilment of the Old Testament, even though no text is cited (though note Acts 2.25-36). The absence of any citation here is not problematic, for Luke has already shown in the account of the Transfiguration (9.28-36) that the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah) have their culmination in Jesus. This is conveyed by the fact that after the command to 'listen to him' (i.e. Jesus), both Moses and Elijah disappear, and only Jesus remains (see J.B. Tyson, 'Jews and Judaism in Luke–Acts: Reading as a God-fearer', *NTS* 41 [1995], pp. 28-29). In addition to the imagery of the Transfiguration scene, both servant images and lament Psalms have been employed throughout (3.22; 22.37; 23.35-36, 46). On the latter point, see Bock, 'Old Testament', p. 504; Fitzmyer, 'Old Testament', p. 536. Tiede (*Prophecy*, pp. 101-103) believes that in 24.25-27, 45-46, Luke is using a 'cumulative argument'. Jesus has been presented as the prophet like Moses, who in turn was both prophet and servant of the Lord (Deut. 34.5; Josh. 1.13) who suffered the wrath of God on account of the sin of Israel (Deut. 3.23-28; 4.21-27). Jesus is thus prophet, Messiah and servant. Tiede also raises the interesting possibility that the argument may be circular. 'The most crucial proof that the messiah must suffer may even be that Jesus, in whom the scriptures are fulfilled, suffered... the answer may precede the question' (pp. 102-103).

30. In this regard, see also the recent monograph by C.A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (JSNTSup, 94; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994). After establishing a case for the pre-resurrection origin of the Old Testament citations in Luke, Kimball concludes that the use of the Old Testament by Jesus was grounded in contemporary exegetical method. This method was familiar to his hearers and was the basis for the exegetical methods of the early church and the New Testament writers.

and pattern, whereby Luke employs not only Old Testament texts, but also Old Testament patterns and ideas, to present an offensive (rather than defensive, that is, apologetic) proclamation of the significance of Jesus. Thus promise and fulfilment is the basic motif for Luke's Christology.[31]

Bock's evaluation is persuasive, and has found support in later studies. Although not clearly addressing the issue at stake here, B.J. Koet regards Luke as a systematic interpreter of Scripture, who presents both Jesus and the apostles as expositors of Scripture. Koet sees a dynamic relationship between Jesus and Scripture in Luke–Acts. He is not happy with 'proof' terminology; rather, he contends that Luke uses the Old Testament to explain Jesus and the nature of his mission, thus presenting the idea of continuity and fulfilment.[32]

While not offering an overall evaluation of Luke's use of the Old Testament, a collection of essays by C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders examines how selective Old Testament traditions were utilized by Judaism, Jesus and Luke.[33] While Evans does believe that Luke sometimes uses the Old Testament in an 'exegetical polemic',[34] the major role of the Old Testament in Luke–Acts is to show how Christianity can be understood from a scriptural basis. Luke–Acts is thus a prophetic narrative.[35] Furthermore, the study of such themes as the Elijah and Elisha tradition, Jubilee release[36] and the use of Deuteronomy illustrate that Evans and Sanders agree with Bock regarding the important role of Old Testament pattern in Luke–Acts.

More recently, Denova has supported and enhanced Bock's thesis, by showing how Luke's promise-fulfilment motif is built around the Old Testament prophetic message. While this is sometimes conveyed via quotation of Scripture, particularly at the beginning of both books, in the majority of instances there is simply an allusion via typology or pat-

31. Bock, *Proclamation*, pp. 261-79.

32. Koet, *Five Studies*.

33. Evans and Sanders (eds.), *Luke and Scripture*.

34. C.A. Evans, 'Prophecy and Polemic: Jews in Luke's Scriptural Apologetic', in *Luke and Scripture*, p. 211. In this essay, Evans lists five uses of the Old Testament by Luke: christological (restoration of Israel via the Davidic Messiah), soteriological (universal salvation), apologetic, minatory, and critical (of Israel's past).

35. C.A. Evans, 'The Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Sermon', in *Luke and Scripture*, pp. 212-24.

36. See further Sloan, *Favourable Year*.

tern. Thus Luke legitimizes both Jesus and his followers by showing how their mission derives directly from the hope of Israel expressed via the prophetic tradition.[37]

3. *Old Testament Pattern in the Travel Narrative*

Given the saturation of Luke–Acts in the thought-world of the Old Testament, it is interesting that no Old Testament citation occurs in the Travel Narrative (9.51–19.28). This leads Karris to comment that in order to find the theme of promise-fulfilment in this section, we need a 'magnifying glass of superior quality'.[38] However, given that we have already ascertained that promise-fulfilment should not be understood merely in terms of Old Testament citation but must take account of Old Testament pattern, basic reading glasses may suffice. The question then remains as to the extent that Luke employs Old Testament pattern in this section.

Clearly Old Testament pattern is evident in the lament over Jerusalem (13.31-35),[39] the use of the Lot/Sodom tradition (17.28-30; cf. 10.12), and the employment of *finger of God* terminology.[40] In addition, C.A. Evans believes that the depiction of Jesus 'setting his face' probably refers to judgment by allusion to Ezekiel (Ezek. 6.2; 13.17; cf. 2 Kgs 12.18; Jer. 42.15-16; 44.11-16; Dan. 11.7, 18).[41] Some time ago C.F. Evans argued for the correspondence in structure between the Travel Narrative and certain sections of Deuteronomy.[42] More recently,

37. Denova, *The Things Accomplished.*

38. R.J. Karris, 'Missionary Communities: A New Paradigm for the Study of Luke–Acts', *CBQ* 41 (1979), p. 95. The same observation was made previously by A.J. Hultgren, 'Interpreting the Gospel of Luke', *Int* 30 (1976), p. 354.

39. For a discussion of the use of the lament theme here, see Tiede, *Prophecy*, pp. 127-32.

40. E.J. Woods, 'Jesus and Beelzebub: The Meaning of "Finger of God" within Luke 11:14-26' (PhD dissertation, University of South Africa, 1989). Woods argues that the background for this expression is Exod. 8.19 and Deut. 9.10, and that Luke here refers not to the Holy Spirit (as in the Matthean parallel), but to the activity of God the Father working through Jesus.

41. C.A. Evans, '"He Set His Face": On the Meaning of Luke 9:51', in *Luke and Scripture*, pp. 93-105.

42. C.F. Evans, 'The Central Section of St. Luke's Gospel', in D.E. Nineham (ed.), *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R.H. Lightfoot* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. 37-53. See also J. Drury, *Tradition and Design in Luke's*

D.P. Moessner has proposed that the Travel Narrative should be seen as a parallel to the Deuteronomistic profile of Israel's history. Moessner argues that by means of the journey motif Luke describes a new Exodus led by Jesus, the prophet like Moses, who travels to Jerusalem as the journeying guest to effect deliverance via the prophets' fate.[43] More recently, W.M. Swartley has drawn on the proposals of both Evans and Moessner to claim that the Travel Narrative has been built on Israel's way-conquest tradition. The journey of Jesus is presented as one of conquest, whereby Satan's power is disarmed by the proclamation of the gospel of peace.[44]

Further use of Old Testament pattern in the Lukan Travel Narrative[45] is evident in the allusions to Isa. 40.3-5/Mal. 3.1 in the sending of the messengers to prepare the way for Jesus who is now the coming one (Lk. 9.52; 10.1). After explicit mention of Jesus' ἔξοδος in 9.31, this underlines the idea of a new Exodus for the people of God. A new part of the divine plan is reaching fulfilment.[46]

Besides the above, our study has unearthed an obvious Old Testament pattern that Luke employs constantly in this section. By means of the parables the reader or hearer is constantly being confronted by the

Gospel: A Study in Early Christian Historiography (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), pp. 138-64, who supports Evans's proposal but also believes that Luke made use of the Matthean structure (so also Goulder, *Luke*, pp. 570-83; Franklin, *Luke*, pp. 328-52). Valid criticisms of Evans's proposal have been raised by Blomberg ('Chiasmus', pp. 217-59), who not only questions the similarity of the proposed parallels, but also suggests more plausible parallels with other parts of Deuteronomy which would destroy the sequence posed by Evans.

43. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet.*

44. W.M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), pp. 126-45. Swartley contends that one of the main purposes in the utilization of this tradition is that of contrast, which is evident in the means of conquest, feasting in supposedly inappropriate places, and the different attitude to those who dwell in the (centre) of the land (i.e. Samaritans).

45. Old Testament pattern is also evident in the Q material, with use of the Noah (17.26-27) and Jonah (11.29-32) traditions.

46. K.R. Snodgrass, 'Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40.1-5 and their Adaptation in the New Testament', *JSNT* 8 (1980), pp. 24-45. On Luke's use of Isaiah, see also D.P. Seccombe, 'Luke and Isaiah', *NTS* 27 (1981), pp. 252-59, who draws attention to Luke's awareness of the wider context of Isaiah, rather than just a mining of the Isaiah text; J.A. Sanders, 'Isaiah in Luke', *Int* 36 (1982), pp. 144-55.

character and nature of the God of old. In fact, Bock (perhaps unwittingly) alludes to this when he states, 'Behind the promise and the pattern is the God who is the same, yesterday, today and forever'.[47] We must now pursue this further.

4. *Old Testament Pattern in the Lukan Parables*

In discussing the character of God in the Lukan parables three broad categories were used previously: the love and care of God, the mercy and grace of God, and God the sovereign judge. We will now examine these characteristics of God with reference to the Old Testament, emphasizing (in bold type) particular characteristics or depictions that have a counterpart in the parables.

The love of God forms the basis for his covenant relationship with Israel (Deut. 7.8; Jer. 31.3). This love is then underlined by the depiction of Yahweh as the Father[48] of his children **who seeks much more than a master–servant relationship** (Deut. 1.31; 32.6-7; Jer. 3.9; Hos. 11.1; Mal. 1.6, 2.10).[49] God as father is linked with his mercy and com-

47. Bock, 'Old Testament', p. 509.

48. On the fatherhood of God in the Old Testament, see M.A. Lagrange, 'La paternité de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament', *RB* 5 (1908), pp. 481-99; T. Paffrath, *Gott, Herr und Vater* (Paderborn: Bonifacius, 1930); L. Moraldi, 'La Paternita de Dio nell' Antico Testaments', *RevistB* 7 (1959), pp. 44-56; P.A.H. De Boer, *Fatherhood and Motherhood in Israelite and Judean Piety* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974). For a discussion of the fatherhood of God in the Old Testament with respect to similar ancient Near Eastern conceptions, see Grelot, *Dieu*, pp. 106-107.

49. Apart from the positive image of God carrying Israel like a child through the wilderness (Deut. 1.31), the other references given occur in the context of dispute. Deut. 23.6-7 forms part of a lawsuit where Israel's character as a rebellious child is contrasted to the character of Yahweh as father (see J.A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy* [TOTC; Leicester: IVP, 1974], pp. 296-99). Jer. 3.19 introduces a dispute poem where God's good intentions for a father–son relationship with Israel in the land of promise were met with a negative response. In Hos. 11.1, Yahweh's love for Israel as a child formed the basis for the Exodus deliverance. Here אהב has the dual sense of affection and covenant loyalty (J.L. Mays, *Hosea* [OTL; London: SCM Press, 1969], pp. 151-53; D. Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah* [WBC, 31; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987], pp. 177-78). Mal. 1.6 introduces a dispute—which runs until 2.9—with the priests who have failed to honour God not only as a master, but also as a father. In Mal. 2.10 the identity of אב אחד is disputed (D.R. Jones [*Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (TBC; London: SCM Press, 1962), pp. 193-94] favours Adam; J.G. Baldwin [*Haggai–Zechariah–Malachi* (TOTC; London: IVP, 1972), p. 237] sees

passion (Ps. 103.13; Isa. 63.15-19; 64.8; Jer. 31.9, 20),[50] his love and discipline (Prov. 3.12), his relationship with the king (2 Sam. 7.14; Ps. 2.7; 89.26-27), and his **special care for the underprivileged** (Ps. 68.5-6; 146.5-9).[51] God is also the **Shepherd** of the flock (Ps. 23.1; 100.3; Isa. 40.11; Jer. 31.10; Zech. 9.16)[52] who **seeks out the lost** (Ezek. 34.11-16).[53] Moreover, God is concerned for his people, **coming to their aid when they are oppressed** (Exod. 2.23-25; Judg. 3.9; 4.3; 6.7; 1 Chron. 5.20; 2 Chron. 13.14; Ps. 136.23-25) even from the ends of the earth (Ps. 61.2), and is the physician who **binds the wounds** of the afflicted (Ps. 147.3; Jer. 30.17; Ezek. 34.16; Hos. 6.1-6).[54] God is also

the reference to either Abraham or Jacob). However, given the synthetic parallelism in v. 10 with *creator*, as well as the antithetical statement in v. 11, the reference is obviously to God (so R.L. Smith, *Micah–Malachi* [WBC, 32; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1984], p. 321; P.A. Verhoef, *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], pp. 265-67).

50. Here God's compassion as Father of the nation is the basis for: 1) a general statement of praise regarding his willingness to forgive sin (Ps. 103.13); 2) a plea by the exiles for God to hear their cries (Isa. 63.15-19; 64.8); and 3) Yahweh's promise to restore the nation (Jer. 31.9, 20).

51. The Ugaritic texts show that care for the underprivileged—specifically widows and orphans—was seen as fundamental to the role of the king (see *ANET*, pp. 149; 151). This concern is basic to the character of God as revealed in the Old Testament (see below). In Ps. 68.5-6 the fatherhood of God is linked specifically to orphans. Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 142-43) notes how this element of God's character is especially relevant for those who give up their family to follow Jesus (Lk. 14.26; 18.28-30).

52. The shepherd is a common metaphor for Yahweh in the Old Testament, usually portrayed in connection with the nation as the flock (Ps. 28.9; 74.1; 77.20; 78.52; 79.13; 80.1; 95.7; 100.3; Isa. 40.11; Jer. 23.3; Ezek. 34.11-16; Hos. 4.16; Mic. 7.14; Zech. 9.16). Ps. 23.1 is unique in picturing God as shepherd of the individual. The metaphor was also used of the leaders of the nation, in particular the king (2 Sam. 5.2; 7.7; Jer. 3.15; 10.21; 22.22; Ezek. 34.1-10) and the coming (Davidic) ruler (Ezek. 34.3; Mic. 5.4). The same imagery is also applied to the guardian of the Essene community in CD 13.9. It is also apparent that the metaphor was quite widespread in the ancient Near East (see *ANET*, pp. 164; 165; 177; 387).

53. God must seek out (דרשׁ) the lost because of the failure of the shepherds (leaders of the nation) to care for the flock (Ezek. 34.1-10). Apart from designating spiritual restitution, there is also a more literal aspect conveyed by the imagery, as the exiles must be retrieved from among the nations. See the discussion in Chapter 8 as to the relationship between the Ezekiel imagery and the parable of the Lost Sheep (Lk. 15.4-7).

54. The Old Testament imagery of binding wounds is used in a metaphorical

approachable and answers the bold requests of his servants (Gen. 18.22-33; 32.26; Deut. 9.18; Judg. 6.36-40; cf. Ps. 91.15; Isa. 65.24). God's love and care are **not limited by cultural ideals** (Jon. 4.11),[55] for they break the bounds of the heavens (Ps. 108.4). A particular focus of God's love and concern is seen in his **care for the poor and underprivileged**, particularly the widow and the orphan (Deut. 10.18; Ps. 10.14; 68.5; 113.5-9; 146.9; Jer. 49.11; Hos. 14.3).[56] In fact, God is more concerned with justice to the poor than with **rigid cultic observance** (Isa. 58.5-9; Hos. 6.6; Amos 5.21-27; Mic. 6.6-8). God's character then forms the basis for covenant commands of a similar nature (Exod. 22.22; Deut. 24.17; 26.12; Prov. 23.10; Isa. 1.17; Jer. 22.3; Mic. 6.8). Finally, God's concern for the poor has a corollary in the **condemnation of the wealthy who live in luxury but show no concern for justice as it relates to the underprivileged** (Ps. 10.2-4; Amos 4.1-3; 6.1-7; cf. *1 En.* 94.8-11).[57]

A fundamental characteristic of God in the Old Testament is that he is a God of mercy (2 Sam. 24.14); in fact he delights to show mercy (Mic. 7.18; Exod. 34.6-7). This mercy is most apparent in the **forgiveness** he offers to sinners (Exod. 34.7; Deut. 4.31; Ps. 78.38; 86.5; Jer. 31.18-20; Lam. 3.22) which, in turn, forms the basis for **prayers of penitence** (Ps. 51.1; Dan. 9.16; Hab. 3.2). God does **not delight in the**

sense of spiritual and emotional renewal. In the post-exilic Psalm 147, the reference is to the emotional and spiritual wounds of the exile, while Isa. 61.1 relates to the low morale of the post-exilic community (here healing will come via a messianic figure). In the pre-exilic and exilic prophets, the image is used in connection with the promise of restoration following judgment, while Hos. 6.1 is a cry for restoration and blessing. (In the latter passage, the intent of vv. 1-3 is unclear. It may be a 'pseudo-summons' for help based on a priestly assurance that a return to cultic observance would alleviate the nation's ills [so Mays, *Hosea*, pp. 94-95], or it may be a genuine plea by the prophet based upon covenant promises [so Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, p. 107].)

55. In Jon. 4.11, the use of אַנִי with ו indicates stress (Stuart, *Hosea–Jonah*, p. 499). חוּס is used in the Old Testament in the sense of *to show concern for* (Gen. 45.20; Deut. 19.21), *to look compassionately upon* (Ezek. 16.3; Ps. 72.13; Jer. 13.14), and *to spare* (1 Sam. 24.11; Ezek. 4.14). Thus, in this context, God is defending to Jonah not only his concern for Nineveh, but also his right to spare it.

56. Against Swartley (*Scripture Traditions*, p. 139) the concern for the poor and marginalized expressed in the Travel Narrative does not support the contention that Luke used Deuteronomy as a literary model, for it is evident that such concern is also firmly rooted in the prophetic tradition and the Psalter.

57. On the Old Testament view of wealth, see Chapter 15, Section 2d, below.

downfall of the wicked but **seeks their restoration** (Ezek. 18.23, 32),[58] never turning his face away from the repentant (2 Chron. 30.9).[59] God's mercy is further evident in that he is **slow to anger** (Num. 14.18; Ps. 86.15), **withholding punishment to enable repentance to occur** (Neh. 9.30; Isa. 48.9; Jer. 18.1-11; Joel 2.13).[60]

As heaven and earth belong to God (Deut. 10.14), he is **sovereign Judge** (Ps. 82.1). This applies not only to Israel, who is accountable to God in terms of covenant obligations (Deut. 28.15-68; Ps. 9.7; Isa. 3.14; 33.22; Ezek.18.30-31; 20.36; Amos 2.4–16; Mal. 3.5), but to all people (Isa. 2.4; Ezek. 25–32; Amos 1.3–2.3). The wicked will certainly not go unpunished (Ps. 1.5; 9.16-17), especially **those who oppress the poor** (Amos 2.7-8; 5.10-12). In view of the day of wrath it is folly to store up wealth (Ps. 39.6; Prov. 11.4; Ezek. 28.4; Zeph. 1.18; cf. Eccl. 6.2), **for wealth is an obstacle to following God** (Deut. 8.13-14), and will be **left behind when one dies** (Ps. 49.10; Eccl. 2.18).[61] Finally, Yahweh is a God who **reverses the fortunes of the lowly and the mighty**, in particular **humbling the proud** (Exod. 15.9-10; Ps. 18.27; 20.7-8; Prov. 15.25; Isa. 10.12-19; 14.11), for he is abundant in power and has immeasurable understanding (Ps. 147.5-6; 75.7; 1 Sam. 2.7).

It is interesting to observe that in a large number of instances where the above characteristics of God are portrayed in the Old Testament,

58. In the Ezekiel context, this is the response of God to the complaint of the exiles (v. 19) that he is unjust in judging people for the sins of their fathers. God replies that each individual is responsible for their own actions (v. 20). Furthermore, he is not unjust, for he always stands ready to forgive the wicked (vv. 21-31). While in this context the primary focus is upon the wicked of Israel, Jon. 4.11 (see above) indicates that God does not delight in the death of the wicked be they Jew or Gentile. For a discussion of the function of the Ezekiel oracle in the context of the exilic community, see L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 1–19* (WBC, 28: Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994), pp. 263-81.

59. Strictly speaking, there is no real precedent in the Old Testament for God rejoicing over the repentant sinner. The closest parallel is God taking delight in re-establishing and prospering the repentant nation of Israel (Deut. 30.1-9).

60. In Isa. 48.9, the withholding of anger is linked to Yahweh's *name*, indicating that forbearance is basic to the divine nature. This is confirmed by Joel 2.13, where the same characteristic is linked with חסד, showing that the divine nature has its outworking in a graciousness that is part of his covenant faithfulness.

61. On the Old Testament view of wealth, see further Chapter 15, Section 2d, below.

either the immediate or the larger context concerns the Exodus or new Exodus. For example, God as the father of Israel is based firmly in the Exodus redemption, for it was here that he brought the nation into being (Deut. 1.31; 32.6-7; Hos. 11.1). Thus, due to the blessings associated with inheriting a land of plenty, God longed for his people to acknowledge this relationship (Jer. 3.19). This father–son relationship that was forged at the Exodus also becomes the basis for pleas by the people for forgiveness (Isa. 63.15-19; 64.8 cf. vv. 1-3), as well as Yahweh's promise to institute a new Exodus deliverance (Jer. 31.8-9, 15-20).

On numerous occasions God's mercy, compassion and forgiveness are linked with the Exodus. These fundamental aspects of the divine nature are revealed directly by God himself as he passes before Moses in the cloud on Sinai (Exod. 34.6-7; cf. Ps. 103.8). Indeed, it was God's mercy that motivated the Exodus in the first place (Exod. 2.24; Deut. 10.15; cf. Deut. 4.31).

Closely linked to God's mercy is his forbearance. The fact that God had already revealed this aspect of his nature to Moses gave Moses courage to intercede for Israel's sin in the wilderness (Num. 14.13-19). It is also described, in the context of the *new things* that God is about to accomplish, as the basis for his decision not to destroy the sceptics of the Babylonian exilic community (Isa. 48.6-9). The similarity in terminology here to Isa. 43.9-19 suggests a continuation of Exodus–new Exodus imagery.[62]

In a similar vein to the father–son image, the worship of God and an appeal for his salvation is linked to his role as the shepherd of Israel, a role that initially finds expression in the Exodus deliverance and the establishment of the nation (Ps. 80.1; 100.3). Thus it is not surprising that the image of Yahweh gathering and feeding the flock is taken up by the prophets to depict the new Exodus deliverance (Isa. 40.11; Jer. 31.10; Ezek. 34.11-16).

The idea of the approachability of God, particularly with bold requests in hand, is also evident in the Exodus, where Moses intercedes for the sin of Israel (Exod. 32.11-14; Deut. 9.15-29). This also finds expression in the later Isaianic literature (Isa. 65.24),[63] in the immediate

62. It is also possible that the *former things* (Isa. 48.3) may relate to events earlier in the exilic period. See J.A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), p. 377; C. Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48: A New Literary Critical Reading* (Biblical and Judaic Studies, 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), pp. 177-78.

63. This promise of Yahweh to hear and respond to the needs of his people

context of a new creation (Isa. 65.17-25) and a wider context of a new Exodus (Isa. 40–66).

God's concern for the poor and underprivileged also has its roots in the Exodus, where he looks compassionately on an oppressed people in Egypt (Exod. 2.23-24; Deut. 10.18-22). Israel on the journey from Egypt to Canaan thus function as a prototype of a needy people (Ps. 68.7-10), and the nation was to remember God's provision for it and reflect this concern to the needy in its midst (Isa. 58.5-9). Concern for the poor is, of course, related to one's attitude to wealth. Hence the Deuteronomic warning of acquiring wealth in the land of promise and plenty, and forgetting God who had delivered the nation out of bondage and who had provided for all their needs throughout the wilderness wanderings (Deut. 8.11-18).

Finally, the recognition of God as sovereign judge is grounded in the mighty acts of the Exodus. Thus, in the Song of the Sea, God is praised for executing judgment upon his enemies, and humbling the proud and arrogant (Exod. 15.1-18).[64]

It is evident, therefore, that the character and nature of God are manifested in his saving acts, both in the sense of providing the motivation for such acts, and in being demonstrated in the actual execution of these acts. Supremely, God's nature is revealed in the Exodus and new Exodus liberation. This is particularly relevant for our present study, since the Lukan parables which develop God's character all occur within the Travel Narrative. Here it is significant that the journey to Jerusalem is placed within the context of the ἔξοδος of Jesus (9.31). While the precise connotation of ἔξοδος in this context is disputed,[65]

should be understood as a reply to the repeated laments of the exilic community that God had forgotten their cause and turned a deaf ear to their cries (Isa. 40.27; 49.14; 58.3; 64.12).

64. The Song of the Sea (Exod. 15.1-18) shows that Israel interpreted the Exodus as both salvation for the oppressed and judgment upon the oppressor. This then became axiomatic for the nation's understanding of the divine nature and the basis for future cries for deliverance. On the Exodus as a manifestation of the judgment of God, see A. Cole, *Exodus* (TOTC; Leicester: IVP, 1973), pp. 30-32.

65. Marshall (*Luke*, pp. 384-85) and D.L. Bock (*Luke 1:1–9:50* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994], pp. 869-70) provide a helpful summary of the various views. Briefly they are: 1) the term relates only to the impending death of Jesus (cf. the use of the word in 2 Pet. 1.15; Wis. 3.2; 7.6; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.8.2) (Michaelis, *TDNT*, V, p. 107; Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 134; Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, I, p. 558; Schweizer, *Lukas*, pp. 104-105); 2) it incorporates the ascen-

the mention of Moses (and the implication that Jesus is the prophet like Moses [9.30-36]), as well as the introduction of the journey theme (9.51)[66] with the reference to Jesus sending on messengers ahead of him,[67] make it hard to resist the conclusion that Luke, by the use of Exodus typology, represents Jesus as on a journey to Jerusalem where a new Exodus deliverance is to be procured for the people of God.[68] This idea is given strength by the findings of Moessner and Swartley discussed above, and further by Denova who presents even more Jesus–Moses parallels.[69]

It is not coincidental, then, that the parabolic teaching regarding the character of God occurs within the journey section. Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is a journey to inaugurate the ultimate saving event of God, in fulfilment of the prophetic hope. In this context, it is fitting that the nature and character of the God of old should be underlined anew, as

sion via the link with ἀνάλημψις (9.51) (Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. 251; Ellis, *Luke*, p. 142; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 384-85; Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 216; L. Sabourin, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* [Bombay: St Paul, 1984), pp. 217-18; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 800; Wiefel, *Lukas*, p. 181; Bovon, *Lukas*, pp. 496-97; Tiede, *Luke*, pp. 188-189; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 418; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 499-500); 3) it incorporates the whole ministry of Jesus from his εἴσοδος (Acts 13.24) to his ἔξοδος (Marshall, *Luke*, p. 384); 4) it refers to the entire future programme from the death of Jesus to the parousia—the new Exodus begins in Jerusalem but this is only the beginning of a larger programme (Bock, *Luke*, p. 870).

66. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 500) correctly notes (against Ringe) that the journey is not the Exodus itself. However, this does not invalidate the use of the journey motif to help interpret Luke's use of ἔξοδος.

67. This text is normally seen as a conflation of Isa. 40.3 and Mal. 3.1 (see Snodgrass, 'Streams of Tradition', pp. 39-40). However, Tiede (*Prophecy*, p. 61) correctly stresses the additional allusion to Deut. 1.22.

68. See further, J. Mánek, 'The New Exodus in the Books of Luke', *NovT* 2 (1958), pp. 8-23; P. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation according to Luke* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp. 102-11; A. Feuillet, 'L'exode de Jésus et le déroulement du mystère rédempteur d'après S. Luc et S. Jean', *RevThom* 77 (1977), pp. 181-206; M. Fishbane, 'The "Exodus" Motif: The Paradigm of Historical Renewal', in *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), pp. 121-51; S.H. Ringe, 'Luke 9:28-36: The Beginning of an Exodus', *Semeia* 28 (1983), pp. 83-89; J.D. Yoder, 'The Exodus of Jerusalem', *EvJ* 4 (1986), pp. 51-69; S.R. Garrett, 'Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1-24', *CBQ* 52 (1990), pp. 656-80.

69. Denova, *The Things Accomplished*, p. 98. For instance, eating a meal with the elders (disciples), and entering into the presence of God overshadowed by a cloud.

the climax of his saving acts begins to unfold. Seen in this way, the parables function as typological–fulfilment stories, thus confirming and extending the findings of Denova.[70] Again, this underlines Luke's use of Old Testament pattern to proclaim the Jesus event.[71]

5. *Conclusion*

We have discovered that the portrayal of the character and nature of God in the Lukan parables has firm roots in the presentation of God in the Old Testament, particularly in the context of the Exodus/new Exodus redemption.[72] This contributes to the understanding of Luke's use of the Old Testament, and underlines the centrality of the promise-fulfilment theme in Luke–Acts. This is so because we have seen that Luke, in utilizing the promise-fulfilment theme, has pressed into service not only direct Old Testament references, but also Old Testament allusions, patterns and ideas. The findings of this chapter have drawn attention to another feature of Old Testament pattern: that of the character of God. This pattern, although often implicit, dominates the Gospel as a whole and is the unifying feature of the Lukan parables. As such, the character of God is a crucial component of Luke's use of the Old Testament, and thus an integral part of the Lukan proclamation.

Having already established that the unifying theme of the Lukan parables is the character and nature of God, and now having assessed the important contribution made by this motif to the Old Testament pattern employed by Luke, the implications of this for Luke's overall purpose need to be explored. On the one hand, it does not seem particularly surprising that Jesus taught about the character and nature of God, nor that such teaching had its roots in the Old Testament. However, the

70. Denova, *The Things Accomplished.*

71. It should be stressed at this point that the themes outlined above may not be *confined* to Exodus/new Exodus contexts in the Old Testament. However, the thrust of the argument presented here is that given that Luke speaks of an 'exodus', it is significant that the themes he presents abound in the Old Testament in connection with the Exodus.

72. In his study of the tradition history of the metaphors for God in several of the synoptic parables, Erlemann (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 275-81) notes that there is no clear departure from the Old Testament view of God. The only new dimensions are: 1) the addition of the *son*, which results in a transferral of the referent in some instances (Mt. 25.31-46 [Judge]; Lk. 19.11-27 [King]); 2) eschatological fulfilment; and 3) joy over the repentant sinner.

question remains as to why Luke, in contrast to Matthew and Mark, wanted to emphasize and develop this particular aspect of Jesus' teaching. Was it that these parables, by their depiction of the character of the God of old, simply contributed to his presentation of Jesus as the journeying prophet on route to Jerusalem to effect a new Exodus? Or are the parables, with their various representations of God, meant to impact upon Luke's readers in a more profound sense?

In light of the conflict settings that are given by Luke for a number of the parables, this question may possibly be answered by an examination of the view of God that is portrayed by the parables in the light of contemporary Jewish views of God. It is to this task that we now turn.

Chapter 15

THE PORTRAYAL OF GOD IN THE LUKAN PARABLES IN THE LIGHT OF JUDAIC VIEWS OF GOD

1. *Introduction*

It has been established to date that Luke's interest in the parables which he incorporated into his Travel Narrative had to do not only with the important motifs they individually contain, but also with the overarching theme of the character and nature of God. This, in turn, forms a vital component of Luke's use of Old Testament pattern, where once more God's character is linked with an Exodus deliverance.

Now we embark on a more ambitious enterprise. It will be argued in this chapter that, given the literary context in which several of the parables appear, it seems that Luke is not only using the parables to depict God's nature, he may also want to contrast Jesus' portrayal of God with the view of God held by his Jewish contemporaries. This is explicit in the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Great Feast, the Lost, and the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector.

It is at this point, however, that we enter a contentious area, for the presentation of Judaism, in particular that of the Pharisees, that emerges from the Gospels has been subject to severe criticism recently from both Jewish and Christian scholars. Often the Gospels are seen as an inaccurate distortion of Jewish religion, reflecting a later polemic of the early church against its Jewish opponents.[1] However, in many cases here we are left with a historical Jesus who causes little offence, and one is left wondering how the man ever came to be crucified! In fact, J.A. Sanders has ably demonstrated that the church's use of the gospel traditions for polemical purposes does not deny their authenticity. On the contrary, the reason the materials were so appropriate for this pur-

1. For example, G. Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; Zeitlin, *Jesus*; Neale, *Sinners*.

pose was that Jesus truly offered a prophetic critique of the Jewish nation. Thus, while the original intention of Jesus was an 'in-house' rebuke, the church inverted this emphasis and used the tradition as an external polemic.[2]

Furthermore, it is not really surprising that Jesus had disputes with the religious authorities. Judaism was not known for its uniformity and the various sectarian groups not known for their tolerance. If the Sadducees and the Qumran sectarians could have sharp disagreements with the Pharisees, then why is it so hard to imagine a carpenter from Nazareth, who clearly seems to be at odds with the scribal *halakhah*, encountering such vehement opposition?

On the one hand, for our purposes the authenticity of the conflict material is not a major concern, for we are focused more upon Luke's presentation. However, if Luke intends to present a contrast with Jewish views of God, then he needs something to argue against. Demolishing a straw man makes little impact and, in the end, serves no useful purpose for his readers.[3] Because of this, we need to assess the evidence for the particular view of God in Judaism that is confronted by the parables noted above. Furthermore, we will examine similar evidence in relation to the other parables we have studied which do not make such an explicit contrast.

Before analysing this literature a few important preliminary remarks are necessary:

1) It is notoriously difficult to establish a comprehensive picture of the beliefs of Judaism in the first century CE. Indeed, much of the material that will be cited below, in particular the rabbinic/Talmudic literature, is certainly later than the first century. E.P. Sanders's warning, that an over-reliance on such material can distort one's view of first-century Judaism, should be taken seriously.[4] Thus I will attempt

2. J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 251-53.

3. As acknowledged by Brawley (*Conflict*, p. 105), who states, 'Luke's Jesus will make slight impression on his readers if his antagonists are opponents of straw'. Contrast this with the proposal of M.A. Powell ('Religious Leaders', pp. 92-93), who asserts that the religious leaders should not be seen as representative of the historical contemporaries of either Jesus or the Evangelist. Rather, they merely form part of the narrative plot. Powell's conclusion is evidence of the consequences of utilizing one discipline in isolation. When literary (i.e. narrative) criticism is detached from historical concerns, we are left with a story told simply for literary effect.

4. E.P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM

to stratify the material presented in this chapter by date. This is necessary if a valid case is to be made that the parables in question are used to correct lost or distorted Jewish emphases. Obviously the period of prime importance is the pre-Christian era. Then follows the period roughly contemporaneous with the formulation of the gospel traditions, then the rabbinic writings of the tannaitic (pre-200 CE), amoraic (200–500 CE) and later periods (midrashim). However, in examining the Jewish writings, similar motifs within each overall theme will first of all be discussed without reference to the date of such material. Hopefully this will make for a more systematic and less repetitious presentation.

A further point is here worthy of note: if Luke's Jesus addresses a particular issue or need then it seems highly likely that such a matter was deemed relevant for the contemporary audience, for a teacher or writer will normally seek to address what they consider to be the pertinent issues.[5] Consequently, if writings from a later period testify to a belief or attitude that appears to be addressed in the Gospels (in this case the parables), then it would appear reasonable to suggest that such an attitude had its roots in the earlier period.[6] Furthermore, Neusner has shown that in many ways the Gospel portrait of the Pharisees is an accurate reflection of later rabbinic teaching. He states:

> When we survey the references to Pharisees in the Synoptic Gospels, we observe close correspondences to what the later rabbinic traditions say... the legal agenda at every point has a counterpart in the rabbinic

Press; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1992), p. 235.

5. J.A. Sanders ('Ethic', p. 252) comments, 'We must assume that both Jesus and the Evangelists had reasons for saying what they said... It means that one must assume that they had something to say a) that would have been understood by contemporaries, and b) that would have been to some extent different from what the contemporaries already were thinking'.

6. This is not to suggest a direct line from the Pharisees to the rabbis, merely a connection in thought between the rabbis and the earlier period. On the former, see G. Stemberger, *Jewish Contemporaries of Jesus: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). For rabbinic traditions regarding the Pharisees, see J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (3 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1971).

> traditions of the Pharisees. Moreover the stress of the Gospels seems just about right...[7]

2) With respect to the rabbinic literature, we need to be aware of plucking fish out of the Talmudic deep to be used as proof-texts.[8] Rabbinic teaching is far from systematic and is not always consistent. Because of this, care will be taken to give a true representation from the literature. In areas where such teaching appears to have departed from the Old Testament, it is perhaps better to think in terms of the *tendencies* of rabbinic teaching, rather than the teaching itself.

3) The secondary literature dealing with Judaic theology tends to address the theology of God indirectly or not at all.[9] This is understandable to some degree, for a comprehension of God's character is bound up with other issues (such as prayer and election). Those works which do touch on the subject either discuss the theology of God in terms of monotheism and creation/providence rather than God's character or nature,[10] or, perhaps because of a desire to present a 'positive' view of Judaism, focus on the points of similarity to the Old Testament or to Jesus rather than on the divergences.[11] The exception to the latter

7. J. Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginning of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 54-55.

8. C.G. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature and Gospel Teachings* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 55.

9. Schürer (*History of the Jewish People*) is more concerned with history than theology, and although theological issues are raised, there is no attempt to compare Jesus with contemporary Judaism, particularly in the areas of concern to this study. Other notable works that do not broach issues related to the character of God are D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone, 1956); G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: Collins, 1973); Zeitlin, *Jesus.* J.H. Charlesworth (*Jesus within Judaism: New Light From Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* [New York: Doubleday, 1988], pp. 131-64) does touch on Jesus' concept of God and offer some contrasts with Judaic belief, but does not give a full treatment. More helpful is J. Riches, *Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1980). Also important as far as this study is concerned is E.P. Sanders's *Jesus and Judaism*, with which I shall interact below.

10. So E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, pp. 242-51; S. Sandmell, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 168-71, 422-23.

11. G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (New York; Schocken Books, 1971 [orig. 1927–1930]), I, pp. 357-442; H. Maccoby, *Judaism in the First Century* (London: Sheldon, 1989); M.R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); E.P. Sanders,

is found in a debate that has occurred especially amongst German scholars. Here the discussion has centred around the essential differences between the concept of God that is evident in the writings of Judaism and the concept of God portrayed by Jesus.[12] On the one hand, there is the viewpoint represented by K. Holl,[13] that in contrast to the Old Testament and Judaism Jesus proclaimed a new concept of God. On the other hand, Bultmann maintains that there is nothing particularly distinctive concerning Jesus' teaching about God himself. Rather, the new element is Jesus' claim that God's eschatological rule is imminent.[14] Kümmel seeks a mediating position. First of all, he rejects the contention that Judaism lost the Old Testament concept of God. In the intertestamental period, the reluctance to use the Name and the use of intermediaries can be explained in other ways.[15] Furthermore, the essential features of the character of God, namely his immanence, goodness, mercy and compassion, together with depictions of him as father and judge, remain. However, there is a new stress in three areas: 1) God seeking the sinner; 2) God's saving reign operating in the present in Jesus (that is, a new reality of God); and 3) in Jesus the father and judge aspects of God are reconciled.[16] G. Lohfink comes to quite a different conclusion, believing that even within Judaism itself there are various irreconcilable differences in the presentation of God. For Lohfink, the new element with Jesus is his claim to mirror God's actions and character.[17] Finally, Erlemann arrives at a position similar in some respects to Bultmann, claiming that, 'The NT picture of God... shows a close proximity to the picture of God in early Judaism, while

Practice and Belief, pp. 190-303.

12. Some of the works are quite old. For a summary of the main viewpoints, see W.G. Kümmel, 'Die Gottesverkündigung Jesu und der Gottesgedanke des Spätjudentums', in *Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1965), pp. 107-25; Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 14-17.

13. Discussed by Kümmel, 'Gottesverkündigung', p. 107; Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 14.

14. R. Bultmann, *Urchristentum und Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 1ff., 10ff. (cited by Kümmel, 'Gottesverkündigung', p. 108 and n. 4).

15. Kümmel, 'Gottesverkündigung', pp. 110-11.

16. Kümmel, 'Gottesverkündigung', pp. 112-25.

17. G. Lohfink, 'Gott in der Verkündigung Jesu', in M. Hengel and R. Reinhardt (eds.), *Heute von Gott reden* (Munich: 1977), pp. 50-65. This essay was also unavailable to me, and I have relied on Erlemann's summary (*Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 16-17).

the relationship to the OT is more distant.'[18]

It is important that the above claims be investigated more closely. In so doing, it will be seen that the views of Bultmann, Kümmel and Erlemann all rest on a selective reading of the evidence. Kümmel, for instance, is not wrong in emphasizing the many compatible areas of thought between the *Gottesbegriff* of Jesus and that of Judaism. However, the passages he cites in support are not the only views represented. In fact, it is here that we encounter a difficult problem, and in some respects Lohfink's conclusion is correct. It is simply not possible to say with any degree of confidence how prevalent some theological convictions actually were within Judaism. Thus no claim can be made that the material presented below is definitively representative of the entire spectrum of Judaism. Nevertheless, the fact that (in our case) a particular view of God is attested must lead us to the logical conclusion that such opinions were held to some degree.

4) Perhaps further complicating the issue is the likely divergence between official theology and popular religious views. Given that the literature was produced mainly by the scholarly minority, it is conceivable that the masses operated with slightly differing views.[19] Given this possibility, on occasions the Gospel teachings may be designed to address popular misconceptions or imbalances rather than correcting official dogma, if indeed it is appropriate to speak of the latter at all.

As acknowledged above, there are many areas of agreement among the presentations of the nature of God that emerge from the Old Testament, from Jesus, and from Judaism. It is not my intention to examine such material.[20] Rather, some key passages from Jewish writings will be presented that reveal interesting contrasts to the picture of God that arises from the Old Testament and the Lukan parables.

To facilitate the discussion I shall categorize the presentation of God with respect to the following areas: a) *ethnocentricity*; b) *the sinner and the outcast*; c) *election*; d) *wealth*; and e) *prayer*. Although these are

18. 'Das ntl. Bild Gottes...zeigt eine große Nähe zum Gottesbild des frühen Judentums auf, während des Verhältnis zum AT von größerem Abstand geprägt ist' (Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 281).

19. As acknowledged by J.J. Scott Jr, *Customs and Controversies: Intertestamental Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995), pp. 276-77.

20. For a discussion of these common features, see E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, pp. 241-78.

slightly different categories from those used previously, they incorporate the same material and will better facilitate a comparison with Judaic views.[21]

2. *Certain Views of God in Judaism*

a) *Ethnocentricity*

By the term *ethnocentricity* I mean the attitude that Israel had to other nations, including the Samaritans. This is included in a discussion of the character of God because Israel's beliefs in this regard were shaped by its convictions regarding God's attitude to the nations.

In the Old Testament, there is a somewhat ambivalent attitude to the nations. On the one hand, the nations are seen to be the objects of God's wrath and are destined for destruction or subjugation (see, for instance, Ps. 2.8-9; Isa. 13-23; 49.23; 54.3; Jer. 46-51; Ezek. 25-32; Amos 1.3–2.3; Mic. 7.16-17). On the other hand, ethnocentric views are the subject of a rebuke given to Jonah the prophet, and through him to the nation of Israel as a whole. Furthermore, the universality of God's salvation is not without attestation in the wider prophetic corpus (Isa. 2.2-4; 42.1-7; 45.22; 56.6-8; 66.18-21; Mic. 4.1-4; Zech. 2.11; 8.20-23; cf. Ps. 22.27-28).[22]

In the intertestamental literature and the rabbis there are several references to the salvation of the Gentiles, or at least the rewarding of those among the Gentiles who do good (*1 En.* 90.37-38; *T. Sim.* 7.2; *t.*

21. In chapter 13, Section 7, the following headings were employed: a) *the care and love of God*, b) *God's mercy and grace*, and c) *God as sovereign Judge*. The present categories of *ethnocentricity*, *the sinner and the outcast*, *election*, *wealth* and *prayer* all relate to God's love, mercy and judgment in some way. For example, ethnocentricity challenges God's universal love and mercy, as well as saying something about the focus of his judgment.

22. Universality in the Old Testament is a disputed point. See D.E. Hollenberg, 'Nationalism and 'The Nations' in Isaiah XL-LV', *VT* 19 (1969), pp. 23-36; D.H. Odendaal, *The Eschatological Expectations of Isaiah 40–66 with Special Reference to Israel and the Nations* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1970); G.R. Hamborg, 'Reasons for Judgment in the Oracles Against the Nations of the Prophet Isaiah', *VT* 31 (1981), pp. 145-59; D.W. van Winkle, 'The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah XL-LV', *VT* 35 (1985), pp. 446-58; A. Wilson, *The Nations in Deutero-Isaiah* (ANETStud, 1; Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986); J. Blenkinsopp, 'Second Isaiah—Prophet of Universalism', *JSOT* 41 (1988), pp. 83-103.

Sanh. 13.2; *y. Pe'ah* 1.1, 15c; *b. Ḥul.* 92a).[23] However, the literature also shows a decidedly negative attitude towards the nations. As one would expect, this is particularly so in the extreme sectarianism of Qumran (1QM 2.8-14; 12.10, 13; 15.1-2), though it is also quite apparent in the intertestamental literature (Sir. 36.1-9; *Pss. Sol.* 17.30; *1 En.* 90.19, 30; 91.9; *Jub.* 24.29-33;[24] *T. Mos.* 10.7), where the nations are seen as objects of destruction or domination. The rabbis too, while sometimes speaking of the preservation of the nations, could also think of the nations as destined for destruction (*Tanḥ. B* x, *Shemini* 14b; *Gen. R.* 83.5; *t. Sanh.* 13.2).

It is here that we must discuss the objections of E.P. Sanders, who is critical of Jeremias (and his continuing legacy) for advocating a 'good-bad-good' model for understanding the relationship between the Old Testament, Judaism and Jesus.[25] In this view, which, as Sanders concedes, is the majority opinion, the Old Testament has a positive attitude to the Gentiles, while Judaism lost this perspective and looked forward to their destruction. It was Jesus who opposed the mistaken views of his contemporaries and sought to realign Judaism with the Old Testament.[26]

Certainly Sanders is correct both to criticize Jeremias's one-sided analysis of the Old Testament,[27] and to acknowledge that increasingly negative attitudes to the Gentiles were due to the continued effects of foreign oppression. Nevertheless, his insistence that favourable perspectives on the nations predominate in the rabbinic literature does not seem to be supported by the evidence.[28] In fact, for this claim Sanders cites no evidence, but refers to his previous book, *Paul and Palestinian*

23. Montefiore (*Rabbinic Literature*, p. 83) states that the salvation of the heathen is a concept more apparent in medieval Jewish literature.

24. This oracle is specifically directed against the Philistines, but E.P. Sanders (*Practice and Belief*, pp. 291-92) is probably correct in believing that it was intended for the Gentiles in general.

25. This understanding certainly predates Jeremias. See, for example, J. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), esp. pp. 369-80.

26. J. Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM Press, 1958).

27. See Jeremias, *Promise*, pp. 40-41, 55-62.

28. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, p. 215. Sanders (*Jesus and Judaism*, p. 217) also laments the lack of pre-70 CE evidence in this respect, although he uses Paul's openness to Gentile salvation as indicative of the prevailing opinion. However, this assumes that Paul's post-conversion viewpoint was essentially the same as that prior to his call and conversion experience on the Damascus road.

Judaism (pp. 207-12). However, here Sanders admits that the rabbis did not have a comprehensive soteriology regarding the Gentiles, and speaks of differing attitudes to them. Of the passages he cites that supposedly indicate a positive attitude, two refer to Gentiles who keep the law and the Noachian commandments respectively (*b. Sanh.* 59a; *b. Sanh.* 56a-b), while the other presents both a positive and a negative perspective (*t. Sanh.* 13.2). On this evidence it is difficult to accept Sanders's argument.

However, in his later book Sanders does make an interesting distinction between general attitude and eschatological expectation. He states, 'A Jew need not have been an admirer of the Gentiles in the present in order to think that in the end, when Israel would be restored and victorious, Gentiles would repent and turn to God'.[29] This distinction is pertinent to our discussion, for the negative thrust in the rabbinic writings regarding the Gentiles is certainly more this-worldly than eschatological. Although the rabbis did at times cultivate the general ideal of doing good to all God's creatures, in a specific sense a particularism is evident in their disdain of the Gentiles. For example, God loves only Israel of all the nations whom he has made (*Deut. R.* 5.7). He is in a special sense the God of Israel: he is not the God of the nations (*Ruth R.* Intro. 1.1). The nations have no part in God (*Cant. R.* 6.1). The Lord is only gracious to Israel (*Midr. Ps.* 2.5). Rabbi Simeon b. Yochai said, 'The best of the *goyim* kill! The best among the serpents crush!' (*Mek. Exod.* 27a [on 14.7]), while God says, 'All the heaps of nations do not belong to me, but only to the treasury and to Gehinnom' (*Pes. R.* 36b). At times, the Gentiles are considered to be excluded from divine mercy. 'If a man repents, God accepts him. Everyone? No, Israel, but not of another nation' (*Pes. K.* 156a). In part, this attitude can be explained by the fact that the rabbis normally understood רע to mean a fellow Jew (*Mek. Exod.* 88b [on 22.8-9]; *Sifre Deut.* 108a; 121b [on 19.4; 23.25]). In fact, after the Levitical injunction forbidding the holding of a grudge against an Israelite, it is added, 'Against others (i.e. Gentiles) you may be revengeful or bear a grudge' (*Sifra* 89b [on 19.18]). In assessing the above evidence, Montefiore concludes:

> The Rabbis did not, I think, reach the stage of religious development at which men realize that God, if he be all-good, can have no enemies. I fear they believed that those who (as they held) hated God were also

29. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, p. 216.

> hated by God. At any rate, they held that those who hated God should also be hated by the Rabbis.[30]

And:

> I think Rabbinic teaching *was* defective about the love of the foreigner and the idolater, and that Jesus might very well have said, 'You all consider your neighbour to be only your fellow Jew, but I tell you that the neighbour whom you are to love includes all men, the Roman and the Greek and the Syrian no less than the Jew'. That would by no means have been needless teaching [italics retained].[31]

Undoubtably the objects of the greatest contempt by the Jews during the period of the second temple were the Samaritans (cf. Lk. 9.51-56; Jn 4.9). The following are examples of the prevailing attitude:

> Two nations my soul detests,
> and the third is not even a people:
> Those who live in Seir, and the Philistines,
> and the foolish people that live in Shechem (Sir. 50.25-26).

> He that eats the bread of Samaritans is like to one that eats the flesh of swine (*m. Šeb.* 8.10).

> A Cuthean and a shepherd of small cattle need not be rescued from a pit... For murder, whether of a Cuthean by a Cuthean, or of an Israelite by a Cuthean, punishment is incurred, but of a Cuthean by an Israelite, there is no death penalty (*b. Sanh.* 57a).[32]

It would seem reasonable, on the whole, to conclude that in post-biblical Judaism the Old Testament balance between the judgment and destruction of the nations and their salvation shifted to the former. This is clearly evident from the sources cited above in pre-Christian literature (Qumran; Sirach; *Psalms of Solomon*; *Jubilees*), in literature roughly contemporary with the emerging gospel traditions (*1 Enoch*), and in later rabbinic thought. This shift was no doubt fuelled by repeated oppression by foreign powers, together with an obsession with purity and an intense hatred for idolatry,[33] and finds most graphic

30. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature*, p. 68.

31. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 62-63.

32. All quotations from the Babylonian Talmud are taken from the Soncino edition (London, 1935).

33. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II, pp. 81-84; Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 68-69; Riches, *Transformation*, pp. 112-44; E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, p. 26; J.J. Scott, *Customs*, pp. 124-26, 277, 335-52. The abhorrence of idolatry is graphically captured in *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 2.1, where an Israelite woman is

expression in the Isaiah Targum:

> On this mountain the Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast and a festival; they think that it is of glory, but it will be to them for shame, strokes from which they will not be rescued, strokes by which they will come to an end (*Targ. Isa.* 25.6).[34]

Here it can be seen that an oracle that originally captured the universal care and salvation of God has been lost and turned into a pronouncement of judgment. However, our concern here is not primarily with how Judaism saw the ultimate fate of the nations, but with how it thought about them in daily living. In this sense, the evidence points to a decidedly negative and aloof attitude, an attitude that, although understandable, is still apparent.

We have seen that in the parable of the Good Samaritan (10.25-37) Jesus challenges a concept of God that would wrongly lead to an evaluation of the concept of neighbour along such ethnocentric lines. Earlier, in the programmatic statement of his mission, Jesus had already expressed the same idea in non-parabolic form by invoking the prophetic model of Elijah and Elisha (4.25-28). God's mercy, love and care cannot be restricted merely to the Jews (cf. 2.32).[35] Jesus thus challenges the view whereby God orders the world according to the law, and where his holiness and righteousness are seen in terms of the destruction of, or separation from, those who do not follow the law. In other words, Jesus shows that God's righteousness is also evident in his kindness and mercy.[36] As Luke's story continues in Acts, this finds very

forbidden from acting as a midwife to a Gentile, since she would be helping to bring another idolater into the world.

34. *The Aramaic Bible*, XI (trans. B.D. Chiltern; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987).

35. For a discussion of the parable of the Good Samaritan (and other material on Samaritans in Luke's Gospel) as an attack on ethnocentricity, see Ford, *Guest*, pp. 79-95. See also Jervell, *People of God*, pp. 113-32, who argues against the common view that by this emphasis Luke prepares for the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. Rather, he contends that the Samaritans are conceived of as wayward Jews who are restored to the flock of Israel.

36. Riches, *Transformation*, pp. 67-77, 145-67. See J. Nissen, 'The New Testament Love Command and Hellenistic Judaism', in P. Borgen and S. Giversen (eds.), *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1995), pp. 123-50, who shows that the distinctive element, with respect to Hellenistic Judaism, of Jesus' teaching regarding love was that it was to transcend community boundaries and embrace one's enemy.

concrete expression in the carrying of the gospel to the Gentile world.

Furthermore, if the audience of the parable was meant to understand that the basic reasons why the priest and Levite ignored the wounded traveller were ceremonial, then Jesus can be seen to be offering a reinterpretation of the law along the lines of Mk 7.1-23 and Mt. 5.21-48. This, of course, accords with the Old Testament prophetic view that God desires mercy rather than sacrifice (Hos. 6.6; Mic. 6.6-8). Here Jesus again challenges a popular view of God by implicitly invoking Old Testament precedent.

b) *The Sinner and the Outcast*

We have already seen in our examination of the Old Testament material that God is merciful, never delighting in the downfall of the wicked, but concerned for their restoration (see, for instance, Ezek. 18.23, 32). This contrasts sharply with a number of references in later Jewish writings, where both God and the righteous rejoice over the destruction of the wicked. Not unexpectedly, such views are dominant in the sectarian literature.

> And he, your Creator, shall rejoice at your destruction.
> (O God), your righteous ones shall be a reproach to the sinners and the wicked (*1 En.* 94.11; cf. 62.1-16; *4 Ezra* 7.131).

Similarly, members of Qumran were to hate the sons of darkness and have no dealings, including table fellowship, with the wicked (1QS 1.9-10; 5.14-16). Furthermore, the community prayed that God would show no mercy and grant no forgiveness to the wicked (1QS 2.7-9). This attitude to sinners is perhaps most vividly captured in the rules of conduct for the Master of the Community:

> I shall have no mercy for all those who deviate from the path.
> I shall not comfort the oppressed until their path is perfect (1QS 10.20-21).

The exclusiveness of the Qumran community is also evident in their attitude to the marginalized. No physically smitten person, be they lame, blind, deaf or mute, was permitted to enter the assembly, and no unclean or impure man could participate in war (1QSa 2.6-10; 1QM 7.4-6). Here we also find an interesting contrast to Jesus' parable of the Great Feast (Lk. 14.15-24). For the Qumran community, the guest list for the messianic banquet includes the learned and intelligent, the tribal chiefs and Levites, and the men of renown. Seating for the meal is to be 'each in the order of his dignity' (1QSa 2.11-21).

In a couple of places in the rabbinic literature God is said not to rejoice over the downfall of the wicked (*Mek. Exod.* 34b [on 15.1]; *Num. R.* 20.12), and is even said to have rebuked angels who sang a hymn of praise over the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (*b. Meg.* 10b; *b. Sanh.* 39b). In these latter passages, however, it is added that God does not himself rejoice, but causes others to rejoice. This is confirmed by the following:

> From the beginning of the Book till this Psalm inclusive there are 104 Psalms, and in none of them occurs the word Hallelujah. But when sinners are destroyed from the earth, and the wicked are no more, then we find, Bless the Lord, O my soul, Hallelujah. And what is the reason? When the wicked perish there is rejoicing (*Midr. Ps.* 224b [on 104.35]; cf. *b. Sanh.* 113b).

> R. Ishmael said, There is joy before God when those who provoke him perish from the world (*Sifre* 37a).

Not only was the future destruction of the wicked to be an occasion of joy, avoidance of sinners in the present was to be so extreme that one halakhic midrash states:

> A person should not buddy up with an evil person, even with the intent of drawing him to the Torah (*Mek. Exod.* 18.1).[37]

In a similar vein, Ben Sirach had earlier counselled:

> Give to the devout, but do not help the sinner.
> Do good to the humble, but do not give to the ungodly;
> hold back their bread, and do not give it to them,
> for by means of it they might subdue you;
> then you will receive twice as much evil
> for all the good you have done to them.
> For the Most High also hates sinners
> and will inflict punishment on the ungodly.
> Give to the one who is good,
> but do not help the sinner (Sir. 12.4-7).

No doubt the basic cause of such hostility to the sinner and the outcast was the issue of ritual purity. Qimron and Strugnell state:

37. *Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael: An Analytical Translation* (BJS, 154; trans. J. Neusner; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988), II, p. 23.

> During the Second Commonwealth, the observance of ritual purity was of such significance that defiling was considered a more severe transgression than bloodshed (Tosefta Yoma 1.12). Thus, the laws concerning purity, and those on the Temple cult, occupied a central place (quantitatively) in the earliest *halakha*. Indeed, most of the controversies between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerned matters of ritual purity... Any controversy on each one of these topics could create serious obstacles to communal religious life.[38]

Given this, it is difficult to support Neale's contention that rabbinic joy over the destruction of the wicked was simply an 'ideological extreme in a religious system of thought', and not a true lack of concern that the wicked repent.[39] Neale not only must relegate a number of references to this ideological category, he wrongly assumes that ideology has no outworking in practice. Furthermore, the view that because of their sectarian nature the Gospels should not be used as source material to construct a view of first-century Jewish religious groups fails to appreciate that the rabbinic literature presents the opposite bias. Consequently, if both the Gospels and the rabbinic writings present a picture of a rather aloof attitude on the part of the religious establishment to 'sinners', then it would seem reasonable to accept this view at face value. This does not mean that all Jews held such opinions; merely that such views were evident.

It is hard to imagine a greater contrast between the above attitudes and that presented by Luke's Jesus. This is especially so with respect to the Qumran community, where Charlesworth rightly concludes that, on the principle of separation on the grounds of impurity, 'Jesus and the Essenes stand at opposite ends of the spectrum'.[40] However, as we have seen, disdain for the sinner was not confined to Qumran. Even such a careful scholar as Montefiore can say without hesitation that Jesus' association with outcasts and sinners was unheard of among the rabbis. Furthermore, he states, 'There must have been among some Rabbis a tendency to aloofness'.[41]

Consequently, it is no surprise that Jesus' unconditional acceptance of the marginalized, and his willingness to associate with sinners in

38. J. Strugnell and E. Qimron, 'An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran', *The Israel Museum Journal* 4 (1985), p. 10, quoted in Charlesworth, *Jesus*, p. 73.

39. Neale, *Sinners*, p. 160.

40. Charlesworth, *Jesus*, p. 74. See also Riches, *Transformation*, pp. 118-23.

41. Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 221-22.

order to draw them to God, aroused such hostility amongst the Jewish religious establishment (Lk. 5.29-32; 7.36-50; 15.1-2). In fact, this contrast in attitudes is epitomized by comparing Jesus' depiction of God's unconditional love and acceptance of sinners in the parable of the Lost Son (15.11-32) with a similar situation envisaged by a parable in the *Apocalypse of Sedrach*. In the latter, the son who squanders his father's inheritance is not forgiven, but banished from his glory (*Apoc. Sedr.* 6.5-8).[42]

Jesus' habitual association with sinners and outcasts is one of the most widely accepted axioms in New Testament scholarship. Coupled with this is the appreciation that such behaviour would have aroused controversy with the Pharisees, particularly because of purity issues.[43] Here again, however, we must interact with Sanders, who is one notable exception to the above consensus. His arguments regarding the relationship of 'sinners' to the אם הארץ have already been noted[44] and are not all that relevant here. What is relevant is his contention that the Pharisees would never have denied the right of the wicked to repent nor, in fact, did Jesus focus on calling sinners to repentance.

Sanders concedes that Jesus no doubt associated with sinners, but claims that the early church amplified this in the tradition.[45] But Sanders's logic is not consistent. If the early church, as he claims, did

42. This is a strange twist in a work that emphasizes the compassion and mercy of God. It is also unclear how the parable is related to Lk 15.11-32. S. Agourides ('Apocalypse of Sedrach', in J.H. Charlesworth [ed.], *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* [New York: Doubleday, 1983], p. 607) considers it possible that Jesus adapted an earlier Jewish parable. Regarding the *Apocalypse of Sedrach* itself, Agourides believes that the material originally arose in Jewish circles and was composed between 150 CE and 500 CE (p. 606).

43. See, for example, B. Lindars, 'Jesus and the Pharisees', in C.K. Barrett *et al.* (eds.), *Donum Gentilicium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 51-63; S. Westerholm, *Jesus and Scribal Authority* (ConB, 10; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1978), pp. 62-91; Riches, *Transformation,* pp. 87-111; B. Witherington, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), pp. 73-81; M.J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), pp. 97-126.

44. See Chapter 8, n. 2 (the parables of the Lost). See also E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 174-211.

45. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 174-75. For instance, Sanders rejects Mk 2.16a, Lk. 15.1-2, and Lk. 18.9-14 as inauthentic. His rejection of Lk. 15.1-2 is most peculiar, considering that he then goes on to claim that the lost sheep/lost coin correspond to the tax-collectors and sinners with whom Jesus associated!

not have a high tolerance for sinners and thus would not have created these traditions, then it follows that the church would have been as unlikely to amplify material of this nature as it would have been to create it in the first instance. In any event, authenticity is not the focal point of our study, for we are more concerned with how Luke presents Jesus' teaching.

Second, Sanders claims that Jesus did not focus on calling sinners to repentance. Again, as is his habit, Sanders must reject the authenticity of numerous sayings that are not helpful to his case.[46] He then tries to locate the precise cause of hostilities between Jesus and the authorities over Jesus' association with sinners. He notes a distinction with Jesus in that forgiveness precedes a changed lifestyle, whereas in Judaism God forgives on the basis of such a change. However, Sanders does not consider this to be a significant difference.[47] The main area of dispute, he believes, can be found in Jesus' bypassing of the normal system of repentance. Rather than demand restitution, sacrifice and obedience to the law, Jesus merely asked that a sinner accept his message and follow him.[48] While this conclusion is legitimate in some respects, Sanders must once more reject the elements of Jesus' message that called for repentance, most notably Mk 1.14-15 and the L material we have discussed earlier.

The final point of concern is Sanders's claim, against N. Perrin[49] and others, that sinners were not considered beyond the realm of forgive-

46. Obviously Sanders must reject numerous portions of the L material, particularly 13.1-9, which is widely regarded as authentic (see Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 552-53; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 1004-1009; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. 716-17). The statement of Riches (*Transformation*, p. 170) is appropriate here: 'I think sometimes the critical caution of some scholars has been almost a kind of self-defence against apologetic'. For a critical assessment of Sanders's negative historical evaluation of the gospel traditions, see Hengel and Deines, 'E.P. Sanders' "Common Judaism"', pp. 1-70. For a rebuttal of Sanders's rejection of the authenticity of Jesus calling for repentance, see B. Chilton, 'Jesus within Judaism', in J. Neusner (ed.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity: Part 2—Historial Syntheses* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 273-76.

47. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 204-205.

48. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 204-11.

49. See Perrin, *Rediscovering*, pp. 91-97. To be fair to Perrin, he suggests that only Jews who had made themselves as Gentiles, i.e. reversal of circumcision, fell into this category. Still, if this is so, we find a dramatic challenge to such an idea in the parable of the Lost Son (Lk. 15.11-32).

ness. In other words, it was not Jesus' proclamation of grace to the wicked that angered the Pharisees. In support, Sanders cites *t. Qidd.* 1.15f., where it is affirmed that even the most wicked person who repents will be saved.[50] However, this is not really the issue. The passages we have examined above demonstrate a lack of concern for sinners. The Pharisees may have granted them the right to repent,[51] but did they show an active concern?

Thus, while Jesus' portrayal of a God who rejoices over the return of the lost does not really have an antecedent in the Old Testament, it can be seen that his attitude to sinners and the marginalized has far more in common with the view of God presented in the Old Testament than with that found in Jewish literature. Again these Jewish views are found across a broad stratum of material: 1) pre-Christian wisdom (Sirach); 2) pre-Christian apocalyptic/sectarian literature (Qumran, *1 En.* 97); 3) first-century apocalyptic (*4 Ezra*); and 4) numerous rabbinic traditions.

Abrahams comments:

> One might put it generally by asserting that the Rabbis attacked vice from the preventative side; they aimed at keeping men and women honest and chaste. Jesus approached it from the curative side; he aimed at saving the dishonest and the unchaste.[52]

c) *Election*

Following the publication of Sanders's watershed study on Palestinian Judaism,[53] New Testament scholars have been wary of evaluating Judaism in terms of 'works righteousness'. Rather, the basis of Israel's relationship with God was the covenant, and repentance and atonement were crucial components in maintaining the covenant relationship at both an individual and a corporate level.[54] However, although the need for repentance is constantly stressed in the Jewish literature, two features are worthy of comment here.

First, for the rabbis repentance needed to be tangible; verbal repen-

50. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism,* pp. 200-209.

51. For the rabbinic view of repentance, see below.

52. I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), I, pp. 57-58.

53. E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM Press, 1977).

54. See also E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, pp. 251-78; J.G.D. Dunn, 'Mark 2.1–3.6: A Bridge between Jesus and Paul on the Question of the Law', and *idem*, 'The New Perspective on Paul', in *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (London: SPCK, 1990), pp. 10-36, 183-214.

tance was simply not enough (*b. Sanh.* 25b).[55] Thus repentance becomes inseparably connected with restitution (*b. B. Qam.* 94b; *b. B. Bat.* 88b). Because of this connection, at times repentance itself tends to be seen in terms of a meritorious act. For example, a passage in the Babylonian Talmud regarding King Manasseh states:

> ...the Holy One, blessed be He, made him a kind of opening in the Heavens, in order to accept him with his repentance, on account of the Attribute of Justice (*b. Sanh.* 103a).

In the tractate *'Abodah Zarah*, a midrash on 2 Sam. 23.1 understands the reference in the MT to the raising of David 'on high' (עָל) in the following way:

> [It means this:] The saying of the son of Jesse, the man who elevated the yoke[56] of repentance (*b. 'Abod. Zar.* 5a).

Elsewhere, repentance and good deeds are described as a shield (תריס) against punishment (*b. Ab.* 4 [m. 11]), while repentance receives a crown from God (*b. Men.* 29b).

While we have already noted that Luke is commonly seen as having a moral view of repentance,[57] two of our parables lack any idea of repentance being a good work, or the notion that God accepts the repentant only on the basis of tangible proof of reform. The first is the parable of the Lost Son, where the prodigal is not only welcomed home by the father, he does not even get a chance to offer to work out his repentance by taking the role of a day-labourer (15.11-24). The second is the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector, where the latter is justified simply on the basis of an acknowledgment of his sin and a plea for divine mercy (18.9-14). Both these stories show that the basis for forgiveness rests solely in God's character, and that he is willing to accept all who return to him.[58]

The second noteworthy feature of the Jewish writings concerning election is that despite both the stress on the necessity for repentance and R. Hillel's warning not to trust in one's self (*m. Ab.* 2.5), there is still evidence of self-righteousness and the thought of indemnity from

55. On the rabbinic view of repentance, see Montefiore, *Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 390-422; Abrahams, *Pharisaism and the Gospels*, I, pp. 57-58.

56. Here עֹל (*yoke*—in the sense of *duty/obligation*) is used in a play on words with עָל.

57. See Chapter 13, Section 5, above.

58. See Fiedler, *Jesus und die Sünder*, esp. p. 228.

judgment. Regarding the former, two passages from the Babylonian Talmud are instructive:

> I give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast set my portion with those who sit at the Beth ha-Midrash and Thou hast not set my portion with those who sit in [street] corners, for I rise early and they rise early, but I rise early for words of Torah and they rise early for frivolous talk; I labour and they labour, but I labour and receive a reward and they labour and do not receive a reward; I run and they run, but I run to the life of the future world
> and they run to the pit of destruction (*b. Ber.* 28b).
> Hezekiah further stated in the name of R. Jeremiah who said it in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, 'I have seen the sons of heaven and they are but few. If there be a thousand, I and my son are among them; if a hundred, I and my son are among them; and if only two, they are I and my son' (*b. Suk.* 45b).

Regarding indemnity from judgment, it was believed by some that the fire of Gehenna has no power over the transgressors in Israel. Those sentenced there are rescued by Abraham (*b. 'Erub.* 19a; *b. Šab.* 33b). There was also the belief that merely to be a descendant of Abraham and receive circumcision was enough to save one from eternal punishment:

> R. Levi said, 'In the Hereafter Abraham will sit at the entrance to Gehenna, and permit no circumcised Israelite to descend therein' (*Gen. R.* 48.8).[59]

> No Israelite who is circumcised will go down to Gehinnom (*Exod. R.* 19.4).

This accords with a passage from Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*:

> And besides, they [i.e. your teachers] beguile themselves and you, supposing that the everlasting kingdom will be assuredly given to those of the dispersion who are of Abraham after the flesh, although they be sinners, and faithless, and disobedient towards God, which the Scriptures have proved is not the case (*Dial.* 140).[60]

59. All quotations from the Midrash Rabbah are taken from the Soncino edition (London, 1961).

60. M.S. Taylor (*Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity: A Critique of the Scholarly Consensus* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995]) contends that polemic against Judaism in the writings of the Fathers was not based on an actual social or religious conflict between the church and synagogue. Rather, the Judaism attacked was a 'theological choice' (p. 196), a symbolic rather than a living entity that the church

In other instances, the rabbis saw future punishment as temporary and limited (*b. Šab.* 33b). Moreover, Israelite sinners can repent in hell whereas Gentiles cannot (*b. 'Erub.* 19a).

Again, we can see that the Lukan parables cut directly across such views. The Great Feast (14.15-24) demonstrates that human response is vital in order to be accepted into the eschatological banquet, and in the introductory sayings Jesus inverts both the seating arrangements and the guest list prescribed at Qumran (14.7-14).[61] One must not simply presume upon one's status (cf. the Barren Fig Tree [13.1-9]). Furthermore, if repentance is not forthcoming, one's relationship to Abraham can be of no assistance whatsoever (Rich Man and Lazarus [16.19-31]), and no amount of self-righteousness or moralizing will benefit (Pharisee and Tax-Collector [18.9-14]). Thus with Jesus there is a 'new particularism'.[62] Only those who accept his message and carry out the will of God will be accepted into the kingdom and escape destruction.

E.P. Sanders argues that Jesus did not, in the main, oppose self-righteousness and legalism. Gospel passages that indicate otherwise are inauthentic (for example, Mt. 23.1-36; Lk. 16.14-15; 18.9-14), created by the early church for polemical purposes.[63] But Sanders is open to criticism at two levels. First, we have already noted J.A. Sanders's insistence that the church's use of the gospel traditions for polemical purposes does not deny their origins with Jesus.[64] Second, E.P. Sanders's argument can also be undermined by citing evidence of self-righteousness and legalism outside of the gospel traditions. While we

utilized in search of self-legitimacy. For the opposing view, see W. Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); J.M. Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996). It seems to me that Taylor's analysis can be accepted in part without necessarily implying that the church was attacking a 'straw man'. The minimum requirement would necessarily be that the early Christians *believed* the model of Judaism they were attacking—if not then self-legitimacy would not be too convincing! In analysing Jewish–Christian relationships as reflected in Justin's *Dialogue*, S.G. Wilson (*Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70–170 CE* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995], p. 263) states, 'there is every reason to think that Trypho represents at least one kind of Judaism that Christians were likely to have come into contact with'.

61. See J.A. Sanders, 'Ethic', pp. 245-71.
62. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, p. 279.
63. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 276-81.
64. See the introduction to this chapter, above.

are not concerned so much with legalism *per se*, the above passages do provide ample evidence of an arrogant, self-assured attitude to salvation among some rabbis.

The Jewish material cited here is, of course, certainly much later than the period in question, but a couple of observations can be made. First, the passage cited above from Justin demonstrates that such beliefs were apparently widespread in the middle of the second century CE. Second, even if we accept Sanders's claim that the gospel traditions that oppose self-righteousness and legalism were early church creations for polemical purposes, then we should probably affirm the reality of that which is being attacked. It is hard to believe that the church had much to gain by attacking an attitude that was non-existent. It is entirely plausible, therefore, that the parables seek to correct a distorted view of God whereby the election traditions were viewed as the basis for one's acceptance before God, irrespective of personal response. Third, Luke's editorial preface to the parable of the Pharisee and Tax-Collector is instructive (18.9). The reader is informed that the story is directed against a self-righteous attitude. Thus Luke, at least, believes that such an spirit does exist, and that it needs correction.

d) *Wealth*

In the Old Testament, there is a dual strand of teaching regarding wealth. On the one hand, wealth and prosperity are marks of the Deuteronomic blessing (Deut. 28.1-14). In the wisdom tradition, wealth, together with long life and honour, is a mark of wisdom (Prov. 3.16; 10.4) and an avenue to friendship (Prov. 14.20). However, affluence carries with it potential danger (Prov. 11.4), and wealth gained via unjust means is severely condemned (Prov. 10.2). Outside of the wisdom tradition the focus is even more negative. It is folly to store up riches (Ps. 39.6; Ezek. 28.4-5; Zeph. 1.18), for wealth undermines concern for the poor (Ps. 10.2-4; Amos 4.1-3; 6.1-7) and may prove an obstacle to following God (Deut. 8.13-14).[65]

In the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic material there are diverse attitudes to wealth.[66] There are severe warnings against the dangers of greed and riches (Sir. 5.1-3; 31.1-18; *T. Dan.* 5.7; *T. Jud.* 17.1; 19.1-2; *T. Iss.* 4.2; *4 Macc.* 2.8-9), especially as it relates to abuses of the poor (Sir. 13.4; *1 En.* 94.6; *Jub.* 23.21). As in the Old Testament, there is a

65. See further, Schmidt, *Hostility*, pp. 40-60.

66. Schmidt, *Hostility*, pp. 60-76.

condemnation of wealth gained unjustly (Sir. 5.8; *1 En.* 97.8), and warnings regarding the folly of accumulating wealth because of imminent death or calamity (Sir. 5.8; Bar. 3.18-19; *1 En.* 97.8-10). There is also a comparative devaluation of wealth. Affluence is less important than wisdom and knowledge (Wis. 7.8-9; 8.5), the fear of God (Sir. 40.1-26; *Pss. Sol.* 1.4-6; *T. Job* 15.7-9), and heavenly values or rewards (*T. Benj.* 6.1-7; *T. Job* 18.8; *Jos. Asen.* 12.12). Despite the above, at times value is placed upon wealth. Wealth is an insurance against begging (*Ahiqar.* 26.10 [Greek]),[67] and good if it is free from sin (Sir. 13.24). Sir. 31.8 states:

> Blessed is the rich person who is found blameless,
> and who does not go after gold.

Sometimes wealth is tempered by charity, but Schmidt observes, in this respect, that 'the danger of tokenism is apparent in the later literature'.[68]

Schmidt also discusses Philo's attitude to wealth.[69] He notes that 80 per cent of passages on wealth show hostility to riches and a condemnation of greed. Most of the remainder deal with wealth bestowed on Israel by God. Philo can speak of wealth in positive terms, but there are other things more worthy of pursuing (*Rer. Div. Her.* 286-87; *Praem. Poen.* 104). Riches are 'unstable', 'idols', and a 'grievous evil' (*Deus Imm.* 147-51; *Gig.* 37), while renunciation of wealth is a means of virtue (*Leg. All.* 3.142-45). Despite these attitudes, however, Philo himself remained an affluent man.[70]

The picture of the Qumran community as a group of poor, ascetic desert dwellers who held a common purse is open to question. Schmidt shows that the common self-designation 'the poor' (אביון) should not be understood in an economic sense (see 1QH 5.22; 4QpPs37 2.8-9; 3.9-10), whereas the evidence for a community of goods is at least ambiguous.[71] Regarding the sectaries' attitude to wealth, most negative descriptions concern the wealth of their wicked opponents (1QS 11.1-2; CD 8.4-7; 1QH 10.25; 1QpHab 8.9-12; 12.10). However, in the hymns there is mention of the renunciation of the desire for wealth (1QH

67. Cited and quoted by Schmidt, *Hostility*, p. 68.

68. Schmidt, *Hostility*, p. 69.

69. Schmidt, *Hostility*, pp. 76-82.

70. See D. Mealand, 'The Paradox of Philo's Views on Wealth', *JSNT* 24 (1985), pp. 111-15; also *idem*, 'Philo of Alexandria's Attitude to Riches', *ZNW* 69 (1978), pp. 258-64.

71. Schmidt, *Hostility*, pp. 91-97.

10.23, 29-30). Furthermore, wealth is one of the three nets of Satan by which he entraps Israel (CD 4.14-19). Despite this, there is evidence of a reversal strand, where the community looked forward to possessing the riches of the nations (1QM 12.14; 19.6; cf. 1QSb 3.19). In addition, the *Genesis Apocryphon* indicates that Abraham's increased wealth was due to his obedience (1QapGen 22.29-33).

In Lk. 16.14, the Pharisees are accused of being 'lovers of money' (φιλάργυροι). In the main, commentators have taken this at face value, often understanding the reference in terms of a prosperity doctrine.[72] T.W. Manson, however, saw the difficulty of reconciling this description with what is known of the Pharisees and suggested that the reference was more appropriate to the Sadducees.[73] We need to examine this issue further.

The greatest problem in ascertaining the Pharisaic view of wealth in the first century is the paucity of written material. We know that Hillel was a poor, generous man who was wise to the dangers of wealth (*m. Ab.* 2.7), but other rabbinic material is much later than the period in question. However, it is worth examining the literature, for later trends may have had their roots in an earlier period.

The rabbis certainly acknowledged the dangers of wealth. It was wealth (i.e. an abundance of gold) that caused Israel to sin in constructing the golden calf (*b. Sanh.* 102a). Moreover, knowledge is always deemed more valuable than riches. However, there is also an affirmation that wealth in moderation is beneficial, for it creates opportunity (*Exod. R.* 31.3; *b. Giṭ.* 70a). For some, the upshot of worldly affluence is that it offsets rewards in the hereafter (*Midr. Ps.* 92.8; *Exod. R.* 52.3).

Notwithstanding the above, there is also a definite prosperity strand in the teaching of the rabbis. Underlying this positive attitude to wealth is the belief that prosperity is a sign of the blessing of God. The following are cited as examples:

72. So Klostermann, *Lukasevangelium*, p. 439; Loisy, *Luc*, p. 411; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, p. 439; K.H. Rengstorf, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (NTD, 3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 9th edn, 1962), p. 192; Grundmann, *Lukas*, pp. 322-23; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 625; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 1112.

73. Manson, *Sayings*, pp. 295-96.

> Beauty and strength and riches and honour and wisdom and old age and grey hairs and children are comely to the righteous and comely to the world (*m. Ab.* 6.8)
>
> For poverty comes not from a man's craft, nor riches from a man's craft, but all is according to merit (*m. Qid.* 4.14).
>
> The *shechinah* rests only on a wise man, a strong man, a wealthy man and a tall man (*b. Šab. 92a;* cf. *b. Ned.* 38a).
>
> Our Rabbis taught: Who is wealthy? He who has pleasure in his wealth (*b. Šab.* 25b).
>
> Rab on concluding his prayer added the following: May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to grant us long life, a life of peace, a life of good, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of bodily vigour, a life in which there is fear of sin, a life free from shame and confusion, a life of riches and honour, a life in which we may be filled with love of Torah and the fear of heaven, a life in which Thou shalt fulfil all the desires of our heart for good! (*b. Ber.* 16b).

Similarly, *b. Hor.* 9a (cf. *b. Šab.* 63a) understands that the priest who is exalted above his fellows (see Lev. 21.10) is one who is beautiful, strong, wise and wealthy.

In contrast to the pronouncements of Jesus, in the rabbinic writings the poor are never praised. In fact, poverty is seen as a curse (*Exod. R.* 31.12; *b. Ned.* 64b). There are also restrictions (20 per cent of income) placed on charity, lest in the process one becomes poor and needy oneself (*b. Ket.* 50a; 67b; *y. Pe'ah* 15b).[74]

Considering Nolland's observation that, given human nature, people are often unaware that they are lovers of money[75] (to which we might also add a general reluctance to admit it!), the above prosperity strand in the rabbinic material is instructive. Although most of the references are quite late, there is evidence from the tannaitic period, and when this is seen in conjunction with the attested prosperity strand in the wisdom tradition (and to a lesser extent at Qumran), it would appear sensible to accept Lk. 16.14 as a reflection of a genuine attitude, though we should not see this as a distinctly Pharisaic attitude.[76] Thus, rather than doubting the accuracy of Lk. 16.14 (or seeking to give it a metaphorical

74. On charity in the rabbinic writings, see the excursus 'Die altjüdische Privatwohltätigkeit und die altjüdischen Liebeswerke', in Str–B, IV, pp. 536-610; Moore, *Judaism*, pp. 162-79.

75. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 810.

76. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 810.

meaning[77]) or attempting to dismiss the rabbinic evidence as irrelevant, we should agree with Schmidt, who states, 'of course, as the Gospels suggest, many may have made a simplistic equation of wealth with the blessing of God'.[78] This 'conclusion seems irresistible given the disciples' incredulous response to Jesus' 'camel through the eye of a needle' pronouncement (Lk. 18.26).[79] Their mindset appears to have been *if the rich (who we thought were blessed by God) cannot be saved, then who can?*[80]

It is instructive that the Lukan parables of the Rich Fool (12.13-21), the Dishonest Manager (16.1-8), and the Rich Man and Lazarus (16.19-31) all pick up only the negative Old Testament (and later) strand concerning wealth, and thus directly confront and challenge Jewish prosperity teaching and its associated view of God. Wealth is not a sign of divine favour. Rather, it is a folly to store up riches, for wealth undermines concern for the poor, and will prove an obstacle to following God.

e) *Prayer*

In our analysis of the Old Testament portrait of God we found that, in line with the teaching of the parables of the Friend at Midnight (Lk. 11.5-8) and the Judge and the Widow (Lk. 18.1-8), God is approachable and answers the bold requests of his people. This understanding is reinforced in numerous places in Jewish literature,[81] most notably in the tractate *Berakot* in the Palestinian Talmud:

77. So Moxnes, *Economy*, pp. 1-9, 163, who argues that this portrayal was a literary-polemic motif that has links to both Jewish and Greek thought, where opponents of a community or outsiders were designated as 'lovers of money'.

78. Schmidt, *Hostility*, p. 86.

79. The authenticity of this saying is accepted by most, even the Jesus Seminar (see R.W. Funk, R.W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels* [New York: Polebridge Press, 1991], pp. 370-71).

80. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 891; Bock, *Luke*, p. 1486.

81. On prayer in Judaism, see Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, II, pp. 454-63; 481-83; J. Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (StudJud, 9; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977); S. Ben-Chorin, *Betendes Judentum: Die Liturgie der Synogoge* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1980); S.C. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For rabbinic ideas on prayer, see Abrahams, *Pharisaism and the Gospels*, II, pp. 72-93.

> A man has a patron, if he bothers him too much, he says, 'I will forget him, he bothers me'. But God is not so; however much you importune Him, He receives you (*y. Ber.* 9.1 [11] 13b).

However, in the same tractate in the Babylonian Talmud, prayer is limited to three times per day (morning/noon/night) based on the model of Daniel (*b. Ber.* 31a). Furthermore, in the midrashim a warning is given against constant prayer, lest one weary God:

> Antonius asked our holy Rabbi: Is it permitted to pray at every hour? He said to him: It is forbidden. He said to him: Why? He said to him: Lest you treat the Most High with frivolity. He did not accept [this answer] from him. What did he do? He went to him early in the morning. He said to him: Greetings, Lord. An hour later he came to him. He said to him: {'MNH RTWQ} [Imperator]! An hour later he [again] said to him: *Shalom* to you, O King. He said to him: Why are you being so disrespectful to the monarchy? He said to him: Let your ears hear what you are putting forth from your mouth. If you, who are flesh and blood, say this in the case of someone who asks after you every hour, how much more so in the case of one who is disrespectful to the Supreme King of Kings, the Holy One. Thus one should not bother him all the time (*Tanḥ. B* 10.11).[82]

Although the final form of *Tanḥuma* dates to 900 CE, Strack and Stemberger argue that the traditions it contains date to 400 CE at the latest.[83] While this is still very late and seemingly irrelevant for our purposes, this tradition could possibly reflect an instance where popular religious convictions have come to the surface. Thus, while the Lukan parables on prayer did not address a deficiency regarding the understanding of God in official Jewish belief, they may have been designed to challenge an underlying attitude that tended to view God as remote. In this regard the comments of J.H. Charlesworth, in discussing Jesus' unique use of *Abba*, are appropriate:

> Is it not conceivable that he called God 'Abba' because he had a conception of God that was in some ways different from *most* of his contemporaries? Many early Jews *tended* to conceive of God as distant, visiting humanity only through intermediaries such as angels, as we know from studying the Pseudepigrapha and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Jesus perceived

82. J.T. Townsend, *Midrash Tanhuma: Translated into English with Introduction, Indices, and Brief Notes (S. Buber Recension). I. Genesis* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1989).

83. See H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), pp. 332-33.

> that God himself was very near, and that he was directly concerned about each person... [italics retained].[84]

3. *Conclusion*

From the analysis above, it is clear that each of the Lukan parables confronts a view of God that has either distorted or departed from the Old Testament portrait. In each case, such a distortion is apparent in some sections of Judaism.[85] With respect to the themes of *ethnocentricity*, *the sinner and the outcast*, and *wealth* these views are evident across a broad stratum of Jewish literature and have attestation both in the pre-Christian era and the first-century CE. With respect to *election*, the first-century CE evidence is not as strong, but a number of arguments have been presented to show that there are grounds for considering that later views had their antecedents in this earlier period. The literature cited that deals with God's character with respect to *prayer* is certainly late and no weighty arguments can be invoked for the prevalence of such views in the first century. Here we are reliant on suppositions regarding a cleft between official dogma and popular attitudes and a conviction that a teacher (in this case Jesus) normally addresses what he or she considers to be the needs of the pupils.

Furthermore, in several of the parables we have examined, the intended contrast to an existing view or mindset is explicitly given in the literary setting. The Good Samaritan addresses a misconception of 'neighbour', the Great Feast opposes a distortion of election and inverts the honour code, the parables of the Lost attack wrong attitudes to the marginalized, and the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector is directed against self-righteousness and aloofness. It has already been demonstrated that at the heart of these attitudes lies a particular (mis)conception of God and his nature and character.

Of the remaining parables examined, while the literary setting may be less explicit regarding a problematic view or belief, we are still pro-

84. Charlesworth, *Jesus*, p. 134.

85. Again, it should be reiterated that a particular view may not be universal. For instance, compare the prayer cited from *b. Ber.* 28b (under *election*, above) with that found in 1QH 7.34, where the petitioner is heavily indebted to the mercy, kindness and forgiveness of God for his current status. See also the saying attributed to Rabbi Hillel in *m. Ab.* 2.5: 'Keep not aloof from the congregation and trust not in thyself until the day of thy death...'

vided with enough information to ascertain how Luke intends the parable to function. The Judge and the Widow is designed to address a pessimistic attitude to God's power or will to respond to prayer, whereas its twin, the parable of the Friend at Midnight, appears in the context of approaching God in prayer and emphasizing God's goodness by means of an *a fortiori* contrast with human parents. The parable of the Rich Fool, as a response to a request for Jesus to act as arbitrator in an inter-family dispute, addresses the issue of wealth and possessions, a fact made even more apparent by the following material on anxiety. The focus of the parable of the Barren Fig Tree is a little more obscure, but here we are not without guidance given that the sense of the parable dovetails nicely with the previous section that stresses the need for individual repentance. Most obscure of all is the Dishonest Manager; however, given the following sayings, it seems reasonably evident that Luke understood the parable in terms of a wise use of wealth and possessions.

It is possible, therefore, that Luke's interest in these parables lay in their view of God in terms of both continuity (with the Old Testament) and contrast (to Judaism). Why? Possibly this was a personal interest, but a definitive answer probably needs to be sought by examining Luke's wider purpose and specific audience. If we can ascertain to whom Luke wrote his Gospel and why, then the rationale for the inclusion of so many unique parables may be further illuminated. Thus we now turn to examine more closely Luke's overall purpose.

Chapter 16

THE PARABLES IN THE LIGHT OF LUKE'S PURPOSE AND TARGET AUDIENCE

1. *Introduction*

In this study so far we have observed that the character of God comes shining through the Lukan parables. Not surprisingly, the various aspects of God's nature depicted in the parables have their roots in the Old Testament, particularly in connection with the Exodus/new Exodus motifs. Luke is concerned, therefore, to portray the nature of God in connection with his representation of Jesus as on a journey to Jerusalem to effect a new Exodus for the people of God.

In the previous chapter, we also examined the contrast between this portrayal of God's nature and certain features of the contemporary Jewish view of God. In order to complete our study, we must assess our findings to date in light of the proposals that have been supplied regarding Luke's overall purpose and the identity of his target audience.[1] This will hopefully shed further light on the reasons why Luke chose these particular parables and employed them in the way he did.

1. The identity of Luke himself, while a matter of some interest, is not the concern here. For a discussion, see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 35-53; Nolland, *Luke*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvii; H. Riley, *Preface to Luke* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1993), pp. 109-17. See also J. Wenham, 'The Identification of Luke', *EvQ* 63 (1991), pp. 3-44, who comes to the quite radical conclusion that Luke was one of the seventy disciples, was the unnamed disciple of Emmaus, was Lucius of Cyrene, and was Paul's kinsman. More recently, Franklin (*Interpreter*, esp. pp. 158-161) defends the view of Luke as a God-fearing Gentile, who has only a 'cerebral attachment to Judaism'.

2. *Some Inadequate Views of the Purpose of Luke–Acts*[2]

Before I discuss three major views of Luke's purpose it is necessary briefly to assess some of the more marginal theories.

B.S. Easton was one of the first to claim an apologetic purpose for Luke–Acts, arguing that Luke wrote to demonstrate to the Roman authorities that Christianity, as the legitimate fulfilment of Judaism, has rightful claims to the status of *religio licita*.[3] Some have been prepared to endorse this proposal in varying degrees,[4] although most who do so understand Luke's task as less of a formal apology and more of a demonstration that Christians are not politically subversive.[5] Denova concedes that apologetic might play a minor subsidiary role, but argues that the main reason for the positive attitude of the state to Christianity is that it continues the prophetic tradition of Gentiles 1) being open to the God of Israel, and/or 2) assisting and even delivering the people of God (thus functioning for Luke as another device of legitimacy). I might add that the depiction of Roman authorities is far from uniformly positive: Jesus is critical of Herod (the Roman appointee) (Lk. 13.32), Pilate is partly responsible for the death of Jesus (Acts 4.25-28), and Roman officials are sometimes corrupt and act contrary to Roman law (Acts 24.22, 26-27; 25.8-11).[6] In addition, Luke's Jesus not only has a zealot for a disciple (Lk. 6.15), his teaching on wealth and possessions,

2. The very term *Luke–Acts* presupposes a certain relationship between the two books. See n. 11, below.

3. B.S. Easton, 'The Purpose of Acts', in F.C. Grant (ed.), *Early Christianity: The 'Purpose of Acts' and Other Papers* (London: Seabury, 1955), pp. 33-118.

4. So Conzelmann, *St. Luke*, pp. 138-44; E.J. Via, 'According to Luke, Who Put Jesus to Death?' in R.J. Cassidy and P.J. Scharper (eds.), *Political Issues in Luke–Acts* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), pp. 122-45.

5. Cadbury, *Making*, pp. 306-16; Leaney, *St. Luke*, p. 5; W. Manson, *Luke*, p. xxi; Tinsley, 'Self-Awareness', p. 14; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 102; E.A. LaVerdiere and W.G. Thompson, 'New Testament Communities in Transition: A Study of Matthew and Luke', *TS* 37 (1976), pp. 582-97; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 10; P.F. Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke–Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (SNTSMS, 57; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 201-19. F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 3rd rev. edn, 1990), pp. 22-25; Riley, *Preface*, pp. 131-42.

6. The contention of E.J. Via ('Who Put Jesus to Death?' p. 140) that the Roman authorities were not guilty of the death of Jesus because they were only trying to win favour with the Jews fails to account for the tone of Acts 4.25-28.

humility and self-denial, and the love of one's enemies is a potential threat to the social patterns of the Roman empire.[7] J.B. Green is correct in stating, 'The coming of this baby [i.e. Jesus] is good news for peasants, not rulers'.[8]

Both A.J. Mattill[9] and J. Jervell[10] believe that Luke's purpose lay in defending Paul. The former sees this defence relating to Paul's trial in Rome, while the latter perceives it to be related to later Jewish Christian attacks. However, there is a lot more in Luke–Acts than Paul, and these proposals can be valid for Acts if Luke's preface (Lk. 1.1-4) relates only to the Gospel.[11]

7. R.J. Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1978); Green, *Theology*, pp. 7-16, 117-21.

8. Green, *Theology*, p. 11. The above difficulties associated with the apologetic view are overcome to a large extent by G.E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke–Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup, 64; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), pp. 311-89, who contends that Luke wrote an apology (following the literary conventions of apologetic historiography) to the church to help Christians define their identity *vis-à-vis* the Roman state, Judaism and the apostles.

9. A.J. Mattill Jr, 'The Purpose of Acts: Schneckenburger Reconsidered', in W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (London: Paternoster Press, 1970), pp. 108-122; *idem*, 'The Jesus–Paul Parallels and the Purpose of Luke–Acts: H.H. Evans Reconsidered', *NovT* 17 (1975), pp. 15-46.

10. Jervell, *People of God*, pp. 16-17, 153-83; *idem*, 'Retrospect and Prospect in Luke–Acts Interpretation', in E.H. Lovering Jr (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1991* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), p. 402.

11. There is no agreement as to whether the preface relates to both the Gospel and Acts (Acts has its own preface [Acts 1.1-5]). See S. Brown, 'The Role of the Prologues in Determining the Purpose of Luke–Acts', in Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke–Acts*, pp. 99-102, who discusses the implications of both views with respect to several proposed intentions for Luke–Acts. See also G. Schneider, 'Der Zweck des lukanischen Doppelwerks', *BZ* 21 (1977), pp. 45-54, and M. Korn, *Die Geschichte Jesu in veränderter Zeit: Studien zur bleibenden Bedeutung Jesu im lukanischen Doppelwerk* (WUNT, 2.51; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1993), pp. 6-32, who both argue that the prologue covers both volumes. This matter, of course, relates to the unity of Luke–Acts in general. Traditionally, any discussion of Luke's purpose incorporates an analysis of both the Gospel and Acts (with the emphasis often on the latter), with the assumption that the same purpose covers both volumes. In fact, the general acceptance of the unity of Luke's two volumes is seen in the compound term *Luke–Acts*. Recently, however, M.C. Parsons and R.I. Pervo (*Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993]) have questioned the validity of simply assuming this unity. While authorial unity is

The view of C.H. Talbert,[12] that Luke wrote as a defence against Gnosticism, has not won support.[13] While some of the arguments that Talbert presents (the virgin birth, the physical aspect of Jesus' resurrection body, the 'many proofs' of Acts 1.4, and the warning regarding the infiltration of heresy in Acts 20.25-35) could be taken as evidence of an anti-docetic thrust,[14] these are minor elements of the work and can be explained in other ways.

Conzelmann's thesis, that Luke wrote to address a crisis of belief over the delay of the parousia, has since been adequately refuted[15] and need not detain us further.

acknowledged by the authors, they argue that generic, narrative and theological unity are not always evident. While there are strong narrative and theological links, there are also differences that should not be overlooked. Furthermore, not only are the two volumes apparently of different genres, they have never been canonically linked. Thus, while Acts may be rightly regarded as a sequel to the Gospel, both books are complete in themselves. The study of Parsons and Pervo raises, among other things, the possibility that the Gospel and Acts have different purposes (for example, the Gospel as evangelistic, Acts as apology). Nevertheless, the general narrative and theological unity (acknowledged by the authors), together with the common dedication to Theophilus, suggest that the purpose of both books is similar. Consequently, although I am primarily concerned with the purpose of the Gospel, I shall refer to material in Acts, especially when it reiterates a theme or characteristic manifest in the Gospel. I shall also continue to use the common designation *Luke–Acts*.

12. C.H. Talbert, *Luke and the Gnostics: An Examination of the Lucan Purpose* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966); *idem*, 'An Anti-Gnostic Tendency in Lucan Christology', *NTS* 14 (1967–68), pp. 259-71.

13. See, however, C.K. Barrett, *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (FBBS, 24; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 62-64, and Ellis, *Luke*, p. 66, who are cautious, but not entirely disapproving of the idea.

14. So N.A. Dahl, 'The Purpose of Luke–Acts', in *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), p. 95 n. 21; Marshall, *Historian*, p. 39; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 21-22.

15. See E.E. Ellis, *Eschatology in Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972); S.G. Wilson, *Gentiles*, pp. 59-87; Mattill, *Last Things*; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, pp. 18-22; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 100-57; A.E. Nielsen, 'The Purpose of the Lucan Writings with Particular Reference to Eschatology', in P. Luomanen (ed.), *Luke–Acts: Scandinavian Perspectives* (Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society, 54; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), pp. 76-93. See also Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, pp. 9-47, 173-85, and Carroll, *Response*, who both argue that Luke writes to keep alive the hope of an imminent parousia by showing the necessity for its delay.

3. *The Preface to Luke's Gospel (1.1-4)*

As a prelude to assessing the major views of Luke's purpose, we should pause to examine his stated purpose as recorded in the preface to the Gospel (1.1-4). This is, however, quite problematic, for ambiguity exists over a number of terms, and the history of research has shown that the preface can be made to fit a range of more precise intentions.[16] I shall first of all examine some of the key terms in these verses.

Luke addresses his work to a certain Theophilus (1.3). This name was quite common from the third century BCE onwards, and was adopted by both Jews and Gentiles.[17] Most regard Theophilus as a real person, as there is no evidence of a name having symbolic significance in similar literary prefaces.[18] However, it is unclear how the adjective κράτιστος should be understood. The term does have first-century attestation as an honorific title used of officialdom,[19] but it could also be used as a polite mode of address (Josephus, *Apion* 1.1). The fact that Luke elsewhere uses the word in an official sense (Acts 23.26; 24.3; 26.25) lends weight to the argument that Theophilus was an official of some sort, or at least a man of important social standing. Possibly he was Luke's patron, responsible for copying or publishing the work.[20]

16. See G. Klein, 'Lukas 1,1-4 als theologisches Programm', in E. Dinkler (ed.), *Zeit und Geschichte* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1964), pp. 193-216; S. Brown, 'Prologues', pp. 99-111.

17. MM, p. 288.

18. C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 134. The idea of Theophilus being symbolic for a wider group goes back to Origen, and is mentioned as a possibility by Plummer (*St. Luke*, p. 5). G. Klein ('Lukas 1,1-4', p. 213) believes that Luke does not, in reality, address an individual. Theophilus represents every reader. More recently, Nolland (*Luke*, p. xxxiii) has suggested that, given the etymology of the name, it might be a synonym for a God-fearer audience. A rather late tradition stated that Theophilus was from Antioch (Ps.-Clem. *Recog.* 10.71), but this, and the accompanying reports, are generally regarded as quite fanciful.

19. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 300; C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, pp. 133-34.

20. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 43; Wiefel, *Lukas*, p. 39. For a description of the custom, see C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 113 (citing the work of A.D. Nock); L. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS, 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 52-57, 190-97. R.H. Anderson ('Theophilus: A Proposal', *EvQ* 69 [1997], pp. 195-215) offers a most novel proposal that Luke wrote to Theophilus the Jewish High Priest from 37 to 41 CE. But this view runs aground on the basis that Luke

As to whether Theophilus was a Christian or an interested non-Christian, the issue depends on how the words λόγων and κατηχήθης (v. 4) are understood. Luke can use λόγος in the sense of *teaching/instruction* (Lk. 4.32; 6.47; 10.39), but it can also have the less technical sense of *matter/thing*, *oral report* (Acts 8.21; 15.6), or *message* (Lk. 1.20). The former sense implies that Theophilus is already a Christian, whereas the latter does not (functioning simply as a synonym for πραγμάτα [1.1]). Similarly, κατηχέω can have the specialized sense of *teach/instruct* (Acts 18.25; cf. Rom. 2.18; 1 Cor. 14.19; Gal. 6.6),[21] or a more general sense of *report/inform* (Acts 21.21, 24).[22] Again, the former tends to imply a post-conversion situation, whereas the latter applies more aptly to pre-conversion.[23]

The emphasis in the preface falls on the final word ἀσφάλεια. The term has a basic meaning of *reliability/confirmation*,[24] and is used in the papyri of a written guarantee or security.[25] Given Luke's use elsewhere of the cognate adjective (Acts 21.34; 22.30; 25.26), the idea here is that the Gospel (and Acts?) are written so that Theophilus may be assured that what he has heard or been taught is reliable.[26] It is likely that Luke intends this not merely in the sense of historical accuracy,[27] but also

consistently translates or explains Palestinian terms (see further, below).

21. So Marshall, *Luke*, p. 43. Schürmann (*Lukasevangelium*, p. 15) sees it in its later, even more technical sense of post-baptismal instruction.

22. Nolland (*Luke*, p. 11) favours this sense in light of the secular tone of the preface (also H.W. Beyer, *TDNT*, III, p. 639). However, there may well be other reasons for the style of the preface, in particular Luke's desire to stress the objectivity of belief (see G. Klein, 'Lukas 1,1-4', p. 214). T. Zahn (*Das Evangelium des Lucas augsgelegt* [KNT, 3; Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1920], pp. 58-59) believes that the reference is to hearsay reports.

23. Fitzmyer (*Luke*, p. 301) is correct in noting that even given the latter sense, conversion is not necessarily implied.

24. K.L. Schmidt, *TDNT*, I, p. 506; G. Schneider, *EDNT*, I, pp. 175-76.

25. MM, p. 88.

26. The argument of Franklin (*Interpreter*) that Luke is critical of his predecessors (particularly the Gospel of Matthew) cannot be substantiated from the preface. While Theophilus's information may need supplementing, there is nothing to indicate that it is inferior, or even, for that matter, that it originates from the πολλοὶ that Luke seeks to emulate. See D.L. Bock, 'Understanding Luke's Task: Carefully Building on Precedent (Luke 1:1-4)', *CrisTR* 5 (1991), pp. 183-201.

27. As proposed by W.C. van Unnik, 'Remarks on the Purpose of Luke's Historical Writings', in *Sparsa Collecta 1* (NovTSup, 29; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), pp. 6-15.

with regard to theological or doctrinal correctness.[28]

It can be seen that having arrived at the end of the prologue a number of issues and questions have been more precisely formulated, but no great headway has been made. The modern reader is still unsure of a number of key factors regarding Luke's purpose. These may be stated as: 1) the precise identity of Theophilus; 2) whether the Gospel (Acts) is intended for a wider group; 3) whether the original reader is a Christian or not;[29] 4) whether the original reader is a Jew or Gentile; and 5) the precise needs of the reader. To answer these questions we must look more closely at the features of Luke's work, taking due account of the warning of L.T. Johnson regarding the dangers of looking for a mirror of the *Sitz im Leben* of the reader in every passage in Luke–Acts.[30] Johnson has rightly shown that Luke–Acts must be primarily understood as a story, a story that is conveyed by the means of a particular structure. Individual passages should, therefore, be seen primarily in terms of the overall structure and not mined for specific details regarding the addressee. In other words, our foremost task is to establish a macro-purpose, rather than trying to pinpoint micro-purposes behind each pericope.

This danger has been even more strongly emphasized recently by Bauckham *et al.* in a series of essays designed to shatter the previously unchallenged consensus that the Gospels did in fact have a particular (narrow) target audience.[31] On the contrary, Bauckham argues, the

28. So Schneider, *Lukas*, p. 40; Dahl, 'Purpose', p. 93; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 9; Bock, *Luke*, pp. 64-65. P.S. Minear ('Dear Theo: The Kerygmatic Intention and Claim of the Book of Acts', *Int* 27 [1973], pp. 133-34) understands the sense to be *as having important significance*. Nolland (*Luke*, pp. 11-12) points out that although there are no doctrinal convictions here, the Gospel will delineate the cost of becoming a Christian. The preface is thus a secular way of expressing the desire for Theophilus to become a Christian.

29. Note the variety of English translations. Compare, for instance, AV, RV, JB, NRSV, NIV, NASB (which imply that Theophilus is a Christian), with NEB, RSV (which give the impression that he is not).

30. L.T. Johnson, 'On Finding the Lukan Community: A Cautious Cautionary Essay', in P.J. Achtemeier (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1979* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 87-100.

31. R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Gospels for All Christians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998). For a response to Bauckham, see P.F. Esler, 'Community and Gospel in Early Christianity: A Response to Richard Bauckham's *Gospel for all Christians*', *SJT* 51 (1998), pp. 235-48.

Gospel writers primarily saw themselves as part of the wider Christian community and operated from the start with the goal of having their work read in that wider community. But while much of the discussion in this book is sober and timely, I still have the following hesitations. 1) Why must Matthew and Luke, who obviously had access to a widely circulating Mark, seek to achieve a similar wide circulation? 2) Overall redactional strategies may indicate a target audience, even with the realization that the Gospel would be circulated widely. 3) Given the reciprocity and interconnectedness of the early church (as is clearly evident in the letters of Ignatius), does this necessarily preclude writing a Gospel for a particular group, with the secondary aim or realization that a wider circulation was inevitable? 4) The New Testament epistles were written for specific churches, but obviously had a wider circulation (note especially Philemon).[32] Thus we will proceed with the assumption that Luke had in view, at least in an initial sense, a specific target audience.

4. *Arguments for a Christian Audience*

As discussed in a previous chapter, one of Luke's main themes is that of promise-fulfilment. Clearly he is concerned to stress the connection between Judaism and Christianity, whereby Christianity is presented as the legitimate heir of Old Testament promises. Fitzmyer puts it succinctly:

> ...Christianity [is] the logical and legitimate outgrowth or continuation of Judaism... Thus Luke is concerned to pass on to a postapostolic age a Jesus-tradition that is related to the biblical history of Israel and to insist that it is only within the stream of apostolic tradition represented by Peter and Paul, that one finds this divinely destined salvation.[33]

Although this is particularly evident, the precise reason as to why Luke has this concern is not so apparent. We will now examine a number of the arguments proposed.

The majority favour a Christian audience for Luke–Acts.[34] In taking

32. For a further critique of the various essays in Bauckham, see Esler, 'Community and Gospel'.

33. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 9.

34. In addition to the particular views discussed below, see Plummer, *St. Luke*, pp. xxxiii-iv; Lagrange, *Saint Luc*, p. 7; Godet, *St. Luke*, I, pp. 30, 62-63; Creed, *St. Luke*, p. 5; Geldenhuys, *Luke*, pp. 41-42; Schmid, *Lukas*, p. 25; Dahl, 'Purpose',

this approach, most consider that the emphasis on promise-fulfilment is designed to help the church clarify its position *vis-à-vis* Judaism. Some would wish to tie this to a setting of opposition or persecution of the church by Jews,[35] others to a situation where Luke simply wishes to confirm the historical basis of the Christian faith.[36]

p. 93; Schweizer, *Lukas*, pp. 9-10; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 35-36; O'Toole, *Luke's Theology*, pp. 18, 266; Schneider, 'Der Zweck', pp. 45-66; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 300; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, pp. 24-26; J. Kremer, *Lukasevangelium* (Die Neue Echter Bibel, 3; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1988), p. 23; Wiefel, *Lukas*, p. 4; F. Bovon, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas. 1,1–9,50* (EKKNT, 3.1; Neukirchen/Einsiedeln: Neukirchener Verlag/Benzinger Verlag, 1989), p. 19; Theissen, *Gospels*, pp. 235-89; Korn, *Die Geschichte Jesu*, pp. 28-30.

35. So S. Brown, *Apostasy*; S.G. Wilson, *Gentiles*, pp. 246-49; Mattill, *Last Things*, pp. 90-91; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, pp. 71-163; Squires, *Plan of God*, pp. 191-94; Bock, *Luke*, pp. 14-15; Riley, *Preface*, pp. 131-42. Maddox (*Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 14-15, 180-87) argues that Luke writes when the rift between church and synagogue is complete. The most likely time setting would be the Council of Jamnia under Gamaliel II, where there was express condemnation of the Nazarene sect. W. Stegemann (*Zwischen Synagoge und Obrigkeit: Zur historischen Situation der lukanischen Christen* [FRLANT, 152; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991]) presents a detailed analysis of the setting of Luke's community. He claims that Luke wrote towards the end of the reign of Domitian, when the church was under attack from two sides. It was encountering increasing hostility (though not official persecution) from the Roman authorities because of its perceived link with Judaism, and was suffering verbal attack from the synagogue which, for its part, wanted to distance itself from the church. Luke writes to legitimize this separation and to present Christianity as a religion not subversive to the state. While Stegemann's work has a number of important insights, it ultimately falls prey to the perils of the mirror method (Stegemann himself claims that the material in Luke–Acts should be understood 'als einen Reflex der lukanischen Epoche' [p. 278]). For instance, on pp. 268-69 he argues, on the basis of Luke's incorporation of diverse traditions into a single unit, that the exhortation to steadfast witness in Lk. 12.1-12 is evidence that the Lukan community is under external pressure. However, it can be argued that this redaction serves a narrative purpose, whereby Luke prepares the reader for Peter's denial, the persecution of the early church and Stephen, and the shipwreck and preservation of Paul (not a hair harmed [Acts 27.34; cf. Lk. 12.7]) (see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, I, pp. 244-46).

36. So Plummer, *St. Luke*, p. xxxvi; W.C. van Unnik, 'The "Book of Acts": The Confirmation of the Gospel', in *Sparsa Collecta 1*, pp. 340-73; LaVerdiere and Thompson, 'New Testament Communities', pp. 582-97; Carroll, *Response*, p. 165; Karris, 'Missionary Communities', pp. 80-97; M. Trainor, *According to Luke: Insights for Contemporary Pastoral Practice* (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1992), pp. 13-35. J.L. Houlden ('The Purpose of Luke', *JSNT* 21 [1984], pp. 53-65) claims

Other arguments proposed for a Christian setting include: 1) certain blocks of teaching, including many parables[37] and various prophecies (Lk. 21.12-19, 27-28, 31-36; Acts 20.29-30; 28.28-30),[38] relate more aptly to Christian disciples; 2) narrative gaps (such as Old Testament allusions/patterns, and Jesus being baptized by John) require Christian knowledge;[39] 3) some of the terms in the preface (*fulfilled*, *delivered*, *ministers*, *word*, *instructed*) seem to have already acquired a semi-technical sense;[40] 4) the Hellenistic preface is designed to encourage the church to take itself seriously as people of integrity;[41] 5) the role of Paul, as a model for the Christian life and a bridge between Jesus/the apostles and the church of Luke's day, is more suited to a Christian audience.[42]

Among those who favour a setting of internal conflict rather than external threat, most pose a situation where rich Christians are neglecting the needs of their poorer brethren.[43] However, some, falling prey to

that the ambivalent attitude to the Jews in Luke–Acts shows an ongoing relationship with Judaism. Thus the issue is internal disunity and conflict, not persecution. However, Houlden fails to read the positive attitudes to Judaism in terms of narrative plot. It is not just a case of selecting isolated texts, but of examining where the narrative leads. Seen in this light, there is increasing hostility to Jesus and Paul, with the eventual conclusion in Acts 28 that the mission to the Jews is a failure (see further under *Conflict* in Chapter 13). Franklin (*Christ the Lord*, pp. 173-85) believes that Luke addresses a crisis in belief over Jesus as Lord. This occurred due to 1) the failure of the parousia to eventuate; 2) Jewish unbelief; and 3) the crucifixion of Jesus.

37. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 15.

38. Kurz, *Reading Luke–Acts*, pp. 13-15.

39. Kurz, *Reading Luke–Acts*, pp. 13-15.

40. Riley, *Preface*, pp. 9-10.

41. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 15. Alexander (*Preface*, pp. 191-93) claims that scientific prefaces could be used on 'in-house' documents. Furthermore, a dedication does not necessarily imply single readership (pp. 56-63).

42. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, pp. 14-15, 66-90, 181.

43. For example, see Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, pp. 215-43; Karris, 'Poor', pp. 112-25, who merges this with a persecution/harassment setting. He notes that almsgiving was not the norm in Greco-Roman culture, and one would generally help a friend in order to collect an IOU at a later date (on this point, see also M.A. Beavis, '"Expecting Nothing in Return": Luke's Picture of the Marginalised', *Int* 48 [1994], pp. 357-68). This, together with a possible theological justification for their wealth, led the rich to abandon the poor, especially in a time of persecution (see also Karris, 'Missionary Communities', pp. 80-97). Esler (*Community and Gospel*, pp. 164-200) also discusses a problem of this nature in Luke's community, though

the mirror-method discussed by Johnson, postulate a variety of inharmonious situations. Horn visualizes a church dominated by self-justification and arrogance, where the despising of others is rife. Some have even succumbed to worldly wealth and have fallen from the faith.[44] Erlemann, focussing more on the parables, posits a setting where there are inner tensions (Lk. 15.11-32), where members lack commitment (Lk. 16.1-13; 19.11-27), and where cultically or financially superior groups find it difficult to embrace a community of equality.[45] However, at the risk of covering previously trodden ground, we must beware of establishing such micro-purposes merely from an analysis of all the component parts of Luke's work.[46]

A quite novel approach has been proposed by J.M. Dawsey. He contends that by the means of characterization and the use of irony, whereby the narrator has a different perspective on Jesus and events than the view of Jesus himself, Luke depicts a church community that is preoccupied with a theology of glory. Rather than take the view of the narrator, the church is challenged to encounter a suffering Jesus and encounter the reality of salvation afresh.[47] However, not only does Dawsey fail to argue adequately for a Christian setting for Luke–Acts, his evaluation of the narrator is problematic.[48]

a) *Gentile Christians*

Traditionally, most interpreters have understood the original recipients of Luke–Acts to be Gentile Christians. It is argued that such an

he opts for a more eclectic purpose for Luke–Acts. For a similar eclectic purpose (including a rich/poor tension, persecution, and apology to Rome), see N. Richardson, *The Panorama of Luke* (London: Epworth, 1982), pp. 8-12, 75-84.

44. Horn, *Glaube und Handeln*, pp. 215-43.

45. Erlemann, *Das Bild Gottes*, pp. 140-44, 185-86, 261-75. One gets the feeling at times that, for Erlemann, a parable has been moulded to fit the particular problem in the Lukan community. This appears somewhat incongruous with his defence of the authenticity of the parables as deriving from the historical Jesus (pp. 52-55).

46. The same point is made by S. Brown, 'Prologues', p. 99; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke–Acts*, p. 18.

47. Dawsey, *The Lukan Voice*, pp. 143-56.

48. See the criticisms offered by J.A. Darr, 'Discerning the Lukan Voice: The Narrator as Character in Luke–Acts', in E.H. Lovering Jr (ed.), *SBL Seminar Papers 1992* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 255-65. See also Gowler, 'Characterization', pp. 54-62.

audience is indicated, first of all, by the use of a Greco-Roman preface,[49] together with the emphasis on Gentiles (especially the God-fearers [Acts 10.2, 22, 35; 13.16, 26, 43, 50; 17.4, 17; 18.7]) and the Gentile mission in both volumes. Second, Luke sometimes eliminates 'Jewish' material, showing less concern for Jewish issues than do Matthew and Mark.[50] Third, Palestinian features are often redacted (Lk. 5.19; cf. Mk 2.4; Lk. 6.48-49; cf. Mt. 7.24-27),[51] most notably the use of Greek and Roman coinage[52] and the substitution of Greek names for Hebrew or Aramaic terms.[53] Fourth, 'Judea' is used in a generic sense to apply to Palestine as a whole (Lk. 1.5; 4.44; 6.17; 7.17; 23.5; Acts 2.9; 10.37).[54] Fifth, the genealogy of Jesus is traced back to Adam/God (Lk. 3.38) rather than to David/Abraham (Mt. 1.16). Sixth, Luke utilizes the LXX rather than the MT in his citations of the Old Testament.[55] Finally, in relation to the parables we have examined, on two occasions Luke reduces the shock value by pre-empting the outcome (18.1, 9). This tends to indicate that the reader is not as well equipped as the original audience to appreciate the details of the story.

If Luke's original readers were, in fact, Gentile Christians, how do the parables we have examined contribute to his purpose? First of all, Luke wants to demonstrate through them that Christian behaviour flows out of, and imitates, the character of God. Furthermore, either in a setting of opposition or persecution by the Jews, or simply a situation in

49. See Alexander, *Preface*, who shows that Luke's prologue is more akin to contemporary medical and scientific prefaces than to literary prefaces.

50. Luke does not take over the discourse on issues of ritual purity (Mk 7.1-23), and his Sermon on the Plain (6.20-36) omits many of the antitheses that appear in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5.21-48).

51. See Jeremias, *Parables*, pp. 26-27; W.C. van Unnik, 'Die Motivierung der Feindesliebe in Lukas VI 32-35', *NovT* 8 (1966), pp. 284-300.

52. Lk. 10.35; 12.6; 19.13, 16, 18, 24, 25; 20.24; 21.2. In some cases the synoptic parallels have the same term, although in the account of the Widow's Mite Mark offers an explanatory comment for his use of λεπτὰ whereas Luke does not.

53. Luke substitutes κύριος / ἐπιστάτης (Lk. 18.41; 9.33) for ῥαββί / ῥαββουνί (Mk 10.51; 9.5), νομικός (Lk. 10.25; 11.52) for γραμματεύς (Mk 12.28; Mt. 23.13), Σίμωνα τὸν καλούμενον ζηλωτήν (Lk. 6.15) for Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος (Mt. 10.4; Mk 3.18), and omits the Aramaic term Γολγοθᾶ (Lk. 23.33; cf. Mt. 27.33; Mk 15.22).

54. Contra Conzelmann, *St. Luke*, p. 41 n. 1, who believes that Luke envisaged Galilee being adjacent to Judea with Samaria alongside both.

55. See the literature cited at Chapter 14, note 10, above.

which the Gentile church sought to clarify its position in relation to Judaism, the parables show that Christianity is indeed the fulfilment of the Jewish hope. In Jesus' actions, and in his presentation of the character and nature of God in the parables, he stands in continuity with the God of the Old Testament. Furthermore, this portrayal contrasts with some key aspects of the Jewish understanding of God. Thus Luke's portrayal of the nature of God in the parables serves *an apologetic function*, for it demonstrates to his readers that continuity regarding an accurate understanding of God is to be found in Old Testament → Christianity, not Old Testament → Judaism.

At this point, we are making the presumption that Luke's Gentile readers would be acquainted with both the Old Testament portrait of God and the distortions that are evident within Jewish thought. Given that most of the initial Gentile converts to Christianity would have been God-fearers—hence Luke's use of the Old Testament—the former premise is quite solid. But is it legitimate to argue that Luke is using the parables to contrast certain distorted views of God in Judaism, when a considerable amount of the evidence we have examined in the previous chapter relates to Palestinian Judaism? In other words, did the Jews of the (western) Diaspora, amongst whom our audience arguably lived, share these views?

Although this question is impossible to answer with certainty, E.P. Sanders has shown that it is legitimate to speak of a 'common Judaism', whereby Jews of the (western) Diaspora shared, in the main, most religious beliefs and practices in common with Palestinian Jews. Although temple worship was obviously restricted, the universal solidarity among Jews meant that festivals, tithing, sabbath, dietary and purity laws, and circumcision were foundational facets of life. A common theology also existed in the areas of monotheism, creation and providence, prayer, covenantal nomism, and some aspects of eschatology. Ultimately, therefore, there was unity around the law, with this unity facilitated also by the degree of control that the Sanhedrin exercised over Diaspora Judaism.[56]

56. E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, pp. 45-314 (esp. pp. 47-49). Similar assessments are made by Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, III, pp. 119, 138-49; P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTSMS, 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 187-88; J.M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996).

In discussing Judaism in the Diaspora, obviously the Qumran literature is less relevant, and arguably there would have been a more tolerant attitude to Gentiles than is evidenced at Qumran.[57] Nevertheless, while endorsing the latter point in part, Sanders goes on to suggest that 'some Diaspora Jews responded to their pagan environment, full of idolatry and sexual immorality (from their perspective), by cutting themselves off from too much contact with Gentiles'.[58]

Recently, Hengel and Deines have expressed reservations over Sanders's 'common Judaism'. While believing Sanders's work to be a much-needed corrective to views which over-emphasize the diversity of Judaism, they consider his description to be an oversimplification. Judaism was simply not as harmonious as Sanders describes, for it was full of internal disputes over *halakhah*. Thus it is more appropriate to speak of a 'complex Judaism'.[59] However, the criticisms of Hengel and Deines relate more to diversity *within* Palestine, not to the Diaspora as opposed to Palestine. Obviously this should caution us with respect to making simplistic statements about the universality of Judaic beliefs. Nevertheless, there was undoubtedly a considerable degree of common theology. Perhaps this is best illustrated by recalling from the previous chapter the statement made by Justin Martyr, where he speaks of Jewish belief in an indemnity from judgment based upon the fatherhood of Abraham (*Diol.* 140).[60] Here it is apparent that (western) Diaspora views of the middle second century CE are in harmony with some of the (later) rabbinic evidence. This harmony is corroborated by Reynolds and Tannenbaum, who suggest that inscriptions found at Aphrodisias confirm the spread of rabbinic authority in the Diaspora. They propose that by the end of the second century CE, there was a oneness between

57. So Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, p. 186, who argues that the Jews of Asia Minor were not introverted but interacted to a considerable degree with Gentiles.

58. E.P. Sanders, *Practice and Belief*, p. 233. This view is endorsed by W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 130; A.J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), pp. 51-52; M.A. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (SJLA, 20; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 123.

59. Hengel and Deines, 'E.P. Sanders' "Common Judaism"', pp. 41, 53, 67-68. For a similar criticism of Sanders, see Neusner, 'Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE. A Review of Recent Works by E.P. Sanders', *BibRes* 6 (1996), pp. 167-77.

60. See Chapter 15, section 2c, above.

the western Diaspora and Palestine as to Torah requirements.[61] Grabbe has also argued that despite the diversity within Judaism, especially due to its adaptation to Hellenism, Jews still clung vigorously to the ancestral religion.[62]

We will thus proceed with our investigation into Luke's purpose with the conviction that the parables are designed to contrast with contemporary Jewish thought, be it Palestinian or of the Diaspora.

b) *Jewish Christians*

In recent times, there have been a number of voices arguing for a primarily Jewish Christian audience for Luke–Acts. The impetus in this direction was given by J. Jervell, who bases his argument on the fact that given the events Luke narrates in Acts, there is simply no room for a predominantly Gentile church (that is, a wholesale conversion of Gentiles does not occur).[63] Furthermore, the church continues to be Jewish in character; indeed, the survival and adoption of Jewish traditions into third-generation Christianity (cf. Matthew and Hebrews) indicates a thriving Jewish Christianity. Finally, the emphasis Luke places on the law,[64] together with the constant ridiculing of the Christians by the Jews, all point to a Jewish Christian audience.[65] Jervell has been followed in some measure by Esler[66] and Koet[67] who, on the basis of the 'Jewishness' of Luke–Acts, argue for a significant component of Jews in a mixed Christian community. Tiede contends that Luke's

61. J. Reynolds and R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary* (Cambridge: Philological Society, 1987), pp. 78-84.

62. L.L. Grabbe, 'Hellenistic Judaism', in Neusner (ed.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, pp. 53-83.

63. Here Jervell fails to do justice to several passages in Acts (14.1-18; 19.21-41) and neglects to take into account the vice lists in the Pauline epistles which contain warnings against pagan and idolatrous practices (Rom. 13.13; 1 Cor. 8-10; Gal. 5.16-21; cf. 1 Pet. 4.1-6).

64. See n. 79, below.

65. Jervell, *People of God*, pp. 41-74, 174-77, 199; *idem*, *Unknown Paul*, pp. 26-51; *idem*, 'Retrospect', pp. 383-404; *idem*, 'God's Faithfulness to the Faithless People: Trends in Interpretation of Luke–Acts', *WW* 12 (1992), pp. 29-36. Jervell believes that the reason for these Jewish attacks centred on Paul and his alleged apostasy from the law and Judaism.

66. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, pp. 30-45.

67. Koet, *Five Studies*, pp. 94-96, 138-39, 156-61.

target audience is the Jewish Christian component of a church in the setting of the Greco-Roman world. Luke writes to present an interpretation of Christian origins, set within Jewish traditions. In particular, he is concerned about the issue of the status of Gentile converts, which he addresses by the means of a discussion regarding God's vengeance and vindication of Israel set in a prophetic-scriptural mould.[68] Brawley also supports the view of a Jewish Christian audience, claiming that Luke is fighting anti-Paulinism in the church. He maintains that Luke–Acts is written as an apology to the Jews, seeking to reconcile Christianity and Judaism by validating the Gentile mission using Paul as a model.[69] J.M. Ford believes that Luke's purpose was to encourage the Jewish Christian communities in Palestine and the Diaspora to accept their enemies. Peace is not won through violence, but by love and forgiveness (following the example of Jesus).[70]

In assessing the above debate, none would dispute the fact that the implied reader of Luke–Acts has at least some knowledge of Jewish faith and practice, and is familiar with the Jewish scriptures (in Greek). Furthermore, he or she has an awareness of Jewish–Samaritan hostilities, as well as a familiarity with the Mediterranean world. However, the Jewish elements in Luke–Acts can be explained in a number of ways, some of which do not require a Jewish audience (see below). In fact, in the end, most of the arguments for both points of view are somewhat inconclusive. The most we can say at this point is that Luke–Acts was addressed to a situation external to Palestine.

Even if the assessments regarding a Jewish Christian audience are correct, the parables play a similar parenetic and apologetic role to that already outlined for a Gentile Christian audience. With regard to parenesis, the character of God is the model *par excellence* for Christian behaviour. In terms of apologetics, whether concerned with the status of Gentile converts or to legitimize Christian origins, Luke uses the parables to validate the claim that in Jesus of Nazareth God is continu-

68. Tiede, *Prophecy*, pp. 14, 50, 107-108, 120-32. So also D. Juel, *Luke–Acts: The Promise of History* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1983), pp. 113-23, although, in contrast to Tiede, Juel believes the separation between Christian and non-Christian Jews is complete.

69. Brawley, *Conflict*, pp. 155-59.

70. Ford, *Guest*, pp. 136-37; *idem*, 'Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Luke's Gospel', in R.J. Cassidy and P.J. Scharper (eds.), *Political Issues in Luke–Acts* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), pp. 80-98.

ing to work out his plan of salvation. Thus Jewish believers can continue in their Christian faith confident that true continuity is to be found there and not in contemporary Judaism.

5. *Arguments for a Non-Christian Audience*

Despite the arguments put forward to support a Christian audience for Luke–Acts, a strong case can be made for a non-Christian audience. First of all, none of the above claims is conclusive for a Christian audience. There is nothing in Luke–Acts to indicate that the rift with Judaism is complete, even given Paul's harsh words in Acts 28.25-28. In fact, Christianity remains very Jewish right to the end of Luke's story. Furthermore, the relationship between Christianity and Judaism in Acts proves very little about Luke's audience, except that Luke felt it vital to show that the Christian faith, though encountering opposition from the Jews, has claim to be the legitimate fulfilment of Judaism.

The preface, of course, can be read in an entirely different manner to that proposed by Maddox. Nolland states, 'Perhaps the studied secularity of the preface (1.1-4) should make us wonder whether this is quite such an inner church document'.[71] Tyson, in fact, argues that given the preface and the content of Luke–Acts, Theophilus's knowledge of Christianity was probably quite meagre.[72]

Maddox's claim that many of the parables are addressed to Jesus' disciples has the logical corollary that some are not (that is, 10.25-37; 12.13-21; 13.6-9; 14.15-24; 15.1-32). Moreover, the inclusion of parenetic material does not rule out an evangelistic intention for Luke–Acts. Luke may well be wanting to stress the cost of commitment for one thinking of embracing the faith. This would apply particularly to the material on wealth and possessions, and the concern for the poor and marginalized.[73]

71. Nolland, *Luke*, p. xxxii.

72. Tyson, *Images*, p. 38.

73. The fact that much of Luke's material is suitable for a dual audience has led some to posit this possibility (so J.C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting* [London: SPCK, 1961], pp. 173-77; Easton, 'Purpose of Acts', p. 33; J.D. Kingsbury, *Jesus Christ in Matthew, Mark and Luke* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], pp. 95-96; F. Bovon, *L'oeuvre de Luc: Etudes d'exégèse et de théologie* [LD, 130; Paris: Cerf, 1987], p. 24). However, C.F. Evans (*Saint Luke*, pp. 110-11) points out the logical difficulties of the work actually reaching two such diverse audiences as Christians and educated Greco-Roman non-Christians at the same

Regarding the role of Paul, C.F. Evans notes that this portion of Acts is strange for the purpose of correcting or supplementing an existing faith.[74] Why should a Christian (particularly an individual) require a knowledge of Paul and the Gentile mission?[75] While the opposing view has proposed one viable reason, Evans's comment shows that the same material (that is, the need to legitimize the Gentile mission) can be read in an entirely different light.

Given the interest shown in Acts in God-fearers (Acts 10.2, 22, 35; 13.16, 26, 43, 50; 17.4, 17; 18.7), particularly the role played by Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch (and to a lesser extent the Roman Centurion in Lk. 7.1-10) as models of Gentiles who embrace Christianity, it is highly probable that Theophilus too was a God-fearer.[76]

time. He argues that 'a more likely hypothesis could be that Luke wrote an apologia...for a non-Christian readership, and that, like Justin's *Apology*, it became by some route part of Christian literature, and indeed of canonical literature' (p. 111). This route would most conceivably have been the conversion of Theophilus (see Loisy, *Luc*, p. 76, who entertains the possibility of Theophilus becoming a Christian between the writing of the Gospel and Acts).

74. This, of course, assumes that the preface relates to both volumes.

75. C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke*, p. 136. Here, again, we encounter the question as to the scope of Luke's preface, for Evans's objection is only valid if the preface relates to both volumes.

76. A view held by H.J. Cadbury, 'Commentary on the Preface of Luke', in F.J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity: Part 1—The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), II, p. 510; W. Manson, *Luke*, p. 3; C.F.D. Moule, 'The Intention of the Evangelists', in A.J.B. Higgins (ed.), *New Testament Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 165-68; Morris, *Luke*, pp. 66-67. Bruce (*Acts*, pp. 21-22) and O'Neill (*The Theology of Acts*, pp. 166-77) believe that Luke wrote to win sympathetic members of the educated Roman middle class, without actually designating them as God-fearers (see also Klostermann, *Lukasevangelium*, p. 363). The interest in Judaism by those in the Greco-Roman world has been documented by Smallwood, *The Jews*, pp. 204-206; also Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, III, pp. 150-76. On God-fearers in Luke–Acts, see M.C. deBoer, 'God Fearers in Luke–Acts', in C.M. Tuckett (ed.), *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (JSNTSup, 116; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 50-71. DeBoer concludes that οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν and σεβομένοι τὸν θεόν function as technical or semi-technical terms in Acts to denote Gentiles attracted to Jewish synagogue worship. See also B. Wander, *Gottesfürchtige und Sympathisanten: Studien zum heidnischen Umfeld von Diasporasynagogen* (WUNT, 104; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1998), who also concludes that God-fearers were a reality in the Diaspora synagogues.

Nolland puts it well:

> Such a God-fearer would have experienced the ambiguity of his situation in Judaism: welcomed, but at the crucial divide still considered to be an outsider to the promises of God. Luke's God-fearer will have been no stranger to the Christian gospel; perhaps he has been reached in an evangelistic itineration like those attributed to Paul in Acts. Luke's God-fearer is also, however, no stranger to Christianity's detractors (whose form he will also recognise in the Acts material). He has not fully found his way into Judaism, and now he stands at the crossroads. On the one hand Christianity is being offered to him as the completion and fulfillment of the Judaism to which he has been drawn, a version of Judaism which can embrace him in his Gentile identity, while itself holding dear all from Judaism that he has come to hold dear. On the other hand there are his Jewish friends who consider Christianity to be a dangerous perversion of their Jewish heritage, and who urge our God-fearer to make the break and to abandon his Gentile identity once for all and to come all the way into Judaism, to become a Jew.[77]

This view explains quite well the positive aspects of Judaism that are presented in Luke–Acts, for Luke seeks to meet the God-fearer on common ground—to attract him without alienating him from the outset. However, in the end, Theophilus must be encouraged to leave the attraction of Judaism. Thus Luke explains that while some Jews have recognized the truth, most have rejected their Messiah and the faith that is the legitimate fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament and Judaism.[78] It also explains Luke's emphasis on the abrogation of the law, for Theophilus needs to understand that in following Jesus the law is no longer relevant in a definitive sense.[79]

77. Nolland, *Luke*, p. xxxii.

78. Tyson, *Images*, pp. 19-41, 182-83. See also *idem*, 'Jews and Judaism', pp. 19-38.

79. The role of the law in Luke's thought is a disputed point in current Lukan research. One basic approach is outlined by Conzelmann, *St. Luke*, pp. 146-47, 212, who argues that the law is considered irrelevant for the church after the Apostolic Council. Conzelmann is followed essentially by C.L. Blomberg, 'The Law in Luke–Acts', *JSNT* 22 (1984), pp. 53-80, who notes that for Luke the law's primary purpose is prophetic; S.G. Wilson, *Luke and the Law* (SNTSMS, 50; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Tyson, 'Jews and Judaism', p. 38; J. Becker, 'Das Gottesbild Jesu und die Älteste Auslegung von Ostern', in G. Strecker (ed.), *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1975), pp. 109-10, who argues that even in the Gospel Jesus seeks to orient his disciples towards God in ways free from traditional salvation-historical and law categories; Franklin,

There is one final argument to be proposed for a non-Christian (God-fearing) audience, one that has not received sufficient attention to date. Notice has already been drawn to the prominence of the repentance theme in Luke–Acts. While this emphasis could be intended to prepare the church for mission, it is eminently more plausible that Luke wants to impress upon Theophilus the need for repentance and conversion.[80]

Given this identity for Theophilus, the parables work in a number of ways. In a parenetic sense, they instruct him about God and demonstrate the implications of following Jesus using the character of God as a model. At a deeper level, however, in these stories of Jesus which characterize and develop the nature of God, Luke found further material to support his case that the Old Testament finds its realization in Jesus and the church. Theophilus is invited to compare the views of God held by the opponents of Jesus—views with which he was possibly familiar because of his association with Judaism—with the portrait of God presented by Jesus. In so doing, Luke hopes that Theophilus will recognize that Jesus truly mirrors and expounds the God of the Old Testament. He is thereby encouraged to leave the synagogue and pledge himself to this new faith with confidence.

6. *Conclusion*

In conclusion, while it is impossible to be certain regarding the identity of the original recipients of Luke–Acts, the most plausible deduction from the internal evidence suggests that the reader is a Gentile who is closely associated with the worship of the God of Israel in the synagogue, who has an appreciation of the authority and content of the Old Testament (in Greek), and who has some knowledge of the Christian

Interpreter, pp. 40-60, 198-209. On the other hand, scholars such as Jervell (*People of God*, pp. 133-51; *idem*, 'Retrospect', pp. 395-404), Juel (*Luke–Acts*, pp. 101-12), and M. Klinghardt (*Gesetz und volk Gottes: Das lukanische Verständnis des Gesetzes nach Herkunft, Funktion und* seinem Ort in der Geschichte des Urchristentums [WUNT, 2.32; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1988]) all argue that the law is not abrogated, but that it continues to be kept by Jewish Christians, and in its relevant aspects, by Gentile Christians.

80. Tiede (*Prophecy*, pp. 122-24) believes that Luke's focus here is upon Jews who need to repent of their ignorance and blindness. This, of course, assumes a Jewish audience for the Gospel. B.E. Beck (*Christian Character*, p. 169), on the other hand, considers that it functions as a warning to Luke's Christian readers to avoid the errors that demand repentance.

faith. Whether Luke addresses himself to a wider group than Theophilus is unclear.[81] It is possible that Theophilus was a representative of a wider group of God-fearers that Luke wanted to reach, but Nolland may well be correct in claiming that 'we need to take quite seriously the focus of the work on Theophilus'.[82] Thus, while there may be a number of subsidiary purposes underlying Luke's work, his main intention appears to be evangelistic. If this is the case, the Lukan parables, in their depiction of the God of old, are not only used for discipleship and apologetic purposes, they also form an integral part of Luke's evangelistic proclamation.

81. Riley (*Preface*, p. 9) argues that similar dedications were normally meant for a wider reading audience.

82. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 12. This contrasts with the view of Wiefel, 'Keinesfalls hat der Verfasser jedoch eine Privatschrift beabsichtigt' (*Lukas*, p. 39).

Chapter 17

CONCLUSION

The impetus for this study arose out of a conviction that the unique features of the Lukan parables would most likely yield clues as to Luke's overall purpose. The first task, therefore, was to lay a methodological basis for a study of the parables, looking particularly at such issues as parable and allegory, and parable interpretation in general. It was argued that on the basis of current research, it is legitimate to speak of allegorical features in the parables of Jesus, for these stories are designed to point to realities beyond themselves. It was also recognized that a parable needs to be interpreted, otherwise one runs the risk of nebulous readings divorced from the historical and literary context.

We then embarked upon a detailed analysis of the Lukan parables, examining the major motifs of each parable and assessing the role played by that parable in its literary context. Here the aim was to study each parable on its own merits and not force it into a preconceived mould.

In the final section we began to synthesize our findings. First of all, it is evident that each of the Lukan parables reinforces a theme that is prominent in Luke–Acts, whether it be the use of wealth and possessions, concern for the poor and marginalized, conflict, repentance, reversal, or prayer. Furthermore, each of the parables contains either an explicit or an implicit portrait of the character and nature of God. It is here that the distinctive aspect of the Lukan parables lies, for, compared to the synoptic kingdom parables, they present the reader with a varied and developed portrayal of a God who is kind and loving of all people, merciful and compassionate, and yet is also the sovereign judge.

None of these divine character traits (with perhaps the exception of God rejoicing over the return of the lost) is new with Jesus, but is an integral part of the Old Testament portrait of God. As such, the parables augment Luke's use of Old Testament pattern, which in turn is integral

to the promise-fulfilment theme, whereby Luke shows that Jesus (and the resultant Christian faith) is the legitimate fulfilment of the Old Testament hope and promise.

As the character of God is often depicted in the Old Testament in connection with the Exodus/new Exodus deliverance, it is appropriate that the parables which depict the nature of God all occur within Luke's Travel Narrative. Here Luke presents Jesus as the prophet like Moses, on a journey to Jerusalem to effect a new Exodus for the people of God. Thus the character of God is underlined anew, as the climax of his saving events begins to unfold.

In addition to expressing continuity with the character of the God of the Old Testament, the parables also express a certain discontinuity in that they contrast with some contemporary Jewish views of God. This is particularly so in the areas of attitudes to non-Jews, a concern for sinners and marginalized groups, election as an indemnity from judgment, wealth as a sign of God's blessing, and possibly the approachability of God in prayer. At times this contrast is given explicitly by Luke in the setting or introduction provided for a parable, at other times it is implicit.[1]

This continuity and contrast regarding the character of God aligns with the Evangelist's overall purpose. Clearly, Luke's concern is to demonstrate that in Christianity the realization of the Jewish hope of salvation has occurred. While the precise identity of the original readers remains a mystery, most modern commentators regard the recipients as either Gentile or Jewish Christians seeking definition *vis-à-vis* Judaism. In this case, the parables not only perform a parenetic function, they also perform an apologetic function by helping to legitimize Luke's argument regarding fulfilment.

Despite the majority inclination to favour a Christian audience for Luke–Acts, I have proposed that a Gentile, non-Christian (i.e. God-fearing) audience best accounts for both the material Luke presents, and

1. It is perhaps appropriate at this point to echo the words of Eckhard Rau, that interpreting an anti-Pharisaical passage as a word of Jesus does not make one guilty of anti-Judaism (see E. Rau, 'Jesu Auseinandersetzung mit Pharisäern über seine Zuwendung zu Sünderinnen und Sündern. Lk 15,11-32 und Lk 18,10-14 als Worte des historischen Jesus', *ZNW* 89 [1998], p. 28). Nor should Luke be so considered for including such material in his Gospel and (if the argument of this study is correct) seeking to highlight some deficiencies in first-century Jewish views of God.

the manner in which he presents it. Luke writes to Theophilus, therefore, to confirm the reliability and truth of Christianity, and to encourage him to leave the synagogue and embrace the faith held by the apostles and Paul.

It is here that the parables play a crucial role in the Lukan proclamation. In their depiction of the God of the Old Testament operating in and through the life and teachings of Jesus, Luke hopes to present a contrast to some of the distortions of the divine nature that abound in contemporary Judaism. Theophilus is thereby prompted to abandon his allegiance to the synagogue, not only on the basis that Israel, in the main, has rejected its Messiah, but also on the grounds that the God of old has revealed and continues to reveal both himself and his plan of salvation through the Christian gospel.

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